The Second Enlightenment: Sacred Rebellion against the Genocide of Freedom

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Abstract

This article employs a combined framework of political realism, critical discourse analysis, and comparative historical study to examine the phenomenon of the "Genocide of Freedom"—the systematic suppression, particularly in the American academy post-October 2023, of critical discourse regarding Israel. Its central argument is that the mechanism of "Sacred Ignorance" (which operates primarily through the labeling of critics as anti-Semitic and the apocalyptic sacralization of Israel) is not merely an ideological conflict, but a realist tool for perpetuating costly policies and consolidating the hegemony of a network of interest groups. By tracing analogous historical patterns, from the Inquisition to modern totalitarian regimes, the article demonstrates how the structural confrontation between critical discourse (science/rationality) and dogmatic discourse (sacred ignorance) has led to the "Genocide of Freedom." In response, the article formulates the call for a "Sacred Rebellion"—as a rational resistance against sanctified ideologies—within the framework of the "The Second Enlightenment" project, considering it both a moral imperative and a realist strategy for reclaiming rationality from the clutches of the power-ideology coalition.

Keywords: Genocide of Freedom, Sacred Ignorance, Freedom of Speech, the Second Enlightenment, Israel Lobby, Anti-Semitism

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1. Introduction

What if the democracies that consider themselves standard-bearers of freedom become, in practice, the very stage for a "Genocide of Freedom"? This central paradox is what this article sets out to investigate. Throughout history, individual and collective freedoms have consistently been among humanity's most fundamental aspirations. Humans have sought to build societies where fundamental individual rights and freedoms are preserved, and where every person can express their ideas and beliefs without fear of suppression. However, the path to realizing these freedoms has always been fraught with difficulties and obstacles; precisely because power structures and governments have often employed various tools in their efforts to maintain control over society, and in doing so, have curtailed freedoms.

In the history of the United States of America, a nation that calls itself the cradle of liberty and democracy, the issue of freedom of speech has always held a special place. However, in recent decades, particularly with the rise of new technologies and the expansion of social networks, we have witnessed a troubling trend of restricting and suppressing freedom of expression. Power apparatuses and state and non-state institutions, utilizing various tools, have endeavored to silence dissenting voices and constrict the boundaries of freedom to serve particular interests. This trend has gradually fostered a form of "Genocide of Freedom" in the realm of expression, which poses a serious threat to the very foundations of democracy and human rights in this country.

One of the most significant arenas where this suppression and restriction are acutely palpable is the academic and university community in the United States and other Western nations. Universities and research centers, once recognized as bastions of intellectual and investigative freedom, now confront political, economic, and ideological pressures. Professors, researchers, and students face threats of professional limitations, exclusion from the academic sphere, and the censorship of sensitive topics. This academic repression not only inflicts damage on intellectual freedom but also weakens the trajectory of scientific and cultural progress in American society.

Under such conditions, currents of resistance and opposition—which may be termed a "Sacred Rebellion"—have re-emerged as the driving engine for change and the revitalization of individual and social freedoms. These movements stand against the structural and systematic influence of power lobbies, which, through

their control over legislative processes and public discourse, have worked not only to suppress critical voices but also to impose specific intellectual frameworks upon the academic community. The perpetuation of a tradition of academic silence in the face of these restrictions not only leads to the further entrenchment of this repressive approach but also jeopardizes the very future of intellectual freedom itself. Consequently, addressing the "Genocide of Freedom" and confronting it has become an inescapable imperative.

This article, cognizant of the conflict's security and historical complexities, examines one of its darkest consequences—namely, the erosion of freedom of speech within Western democracies themselves. The objective is not to disregard genuine threats or to deny Israel's right to exist, but rather to expose the mechanisms that, under the guise of its defense, are undermining the very foundations of democracy and free dialogue in the West.

The analytical framework of this article is the concept of "Sacred Ignorance"; a phenomenon wherein a belief, ideology, or political interest acquires a halo of sanctity, rendering it immune to rational critique and scrutiny. Consequently, any challenge to it is interpreted not as a legitimate difference of opinion, but as a desecration of a sacred matter, and is met with suppression.

The primary research question of this study is: "How do the political, intellectual, and religious structures in the United States and the Western world employ the mechanism of 'Sacred Ignorance' to suppress freedom and control critical discourses?" In response to this query, the main hypothesis of the present article is as follows: "The sacralization of political and religious values, coupled with ideological labeling (particularly through accusations of anti-Semitism), are instruments utilized by power-holders to legitimize the restriction of freedom and perpetuate their discursive domination."

To scrutinize this hypothesis, the following subsidiary questions will also be examined:

- What forms have the discursive mechanisms of "Sacred Ignorance" taken in the contemporary history of the West?
- What is the role of the Israel lobby and Evangelical groups in shaping the dominant discourse surrounding Israel?
- What are the consequences of suppressing critical discourse for democracy and academic institutions?

This research employs a mixed-methods approach (political realism, critical discourse analysis, and comparative historical study) and, by focusing on the case study of America-Israel relations, puts these hypotheses to the test. Concentrating on the suppression of freedom of speech—and specifically, the suppression of the academic community in America—the article

examines the nature of this phenomenon, the tools employed, and its consequences, ultimately highlighting the significance of the nascent "Sacred Rebellion" as a necessary and vital response to the Genocide of Freedom. Finally, this study endeavors to demonstrate how the recognition and revitalization of the concept of "Sacred Rebellion" can provide an ethical and philosophical foundation for defending rational freedom against structures of domination.

The primary contribution of this article is to present an integrated analysis of the phenomenon of "Sacred Ignorance," achieved through synthesizing insights from political realism, discourse analysis, and comparative history. This combined framework facilitates a deeper understanding of how mechanisms of suppression function within the heart of modern democracies.

2. Methodology

This research employs a Mixed-Methods Approach to analyze the phenomenon of "Sacred Ignorance" and its impact on the suppression of freedom of speech. The methodology of this article rests on three main pillars:

2-1. Combined Theoretical Framework:

- **Political Realism:** For analyzing the role of interests, power, and lobbies in shaping foreign and domestic policy.
- **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA):** For examining the discursive mechanisms of labeling, the sacralization of ideology, and the exclusion of rival discourses.
- **Comparative Historical Study:** For tracing the historical patterns of "Sacred Ignorance" from the Medieval Inquisition to modern totalitarian regimes and its contemporary forms.

This combined framework was employed purposefully to answer the research questions: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was directly applied to dissect the mechanisms of labeling and to address the first subsidiary question concerning the forms of "Sacred Ignorance," whereas Political Realism provided the framework for analyzing the role of lobbies (the second subsidiary question), and the Comparative Historical Study furnished the means for tracing patterns of suppression and answering the main research question.

2-2. Research Design: Interpretive Case Study

The present study utilizes an Interpretive Case Study Design, wherein the "special relationship between the United States and Israel and its consequences for freedom of speech" is considered a single, yet holistic

case. This design allows the research to examine the phenomenon within its real-life context with considerable analytical depth.

2-3. Data Collection and Analysis Methods:

- Library and Documentary Sources: Data were collected through a systematic review of primary and secondary sources, including:
  - Theoretical texts (political philosophy, international relations)
  - Historical documents (history of the Inquisition, the medieval Church)
  - Contemporary documents (U.S. Congressional legislation, Department of Education reports, statements from civil society organizations)
  - Quantitative data (reputable public opinion polls, reports on military aid financing)
  - Works by relevant intellectuals and scholars.
- Data Analysis was conducted using Analytical Narrative and Historical Analogy. Within this framework, qualitative data (such as political discourses) and quantitative data (such as military aid statistics) were integrated and situated within the article's theoretical framework to arrive at a coherent explanatory narrative.

2-4. Testing Rival Hypotheses:

This article directly engages with examining and refuting rival hypotheses. For instance, the claim that "the suppression of criticism against Israel is solely to counter genuine anti-Semitism" is challenged with evidence such as internal polls of the American Jewish community and statements by Jewish intellectuals.

2-5. Methodological Limitations:

The primary limitation of this research is its reliance on public documents and data, due to the lack of access to classified government documents or the non-public meetings of lobbies. Nevertheless, by utilizing a diverse and transparent range of sources, an attempt has been made to compensate for this limitation.

This mixed methodology enables a multidimensional and profound understanding of how "Sacred Ignorance" functions as a tool for justifying the systematic suppression of freedom of speech.

3. Theoretical Framework: The Confrontation between Critical and Dogmatic Discourse in the Light of "Sacred Ignorance"

"Sacred Ignorance" is a phenomenon in which a belief, ideology, or political interest acquires a halo of sanctity, rendering it immune to rational critique

and scrutiny, such that any challenge to it is interpreted not as a legitimate difference of opinion, but as a desecration of a sacred matter, and is met with suppression. This phenomenon can be regarded as a contemporary reflection of one of humanity's oldest philosophical struggles: the struggle between *doxa* (δόξα - belief/opinion) and *epistēmē* (ἐπιστήμη - knowledge/science) in ancient Greece, which later persisted in the form of the conflict between faith and reason within the theological tradition. At the core of the theory of "Sacred Ignorance" lies a fundamental confrontation; a confrontation not merely between "science" and "religion," but between two entirely opposed modes of engaging with the world: "critical discourse" versus "dogmatic discourse."

Critical discourse, which represents the pinnacle of rational and scientific maturity, is founded upon the following principles:

- **Methodological Skepticism:** No proposition is accepted a priori; every claim must be subjected to testing, critique, and revision.
- **Reliance on Argument and Evidence:** The legitimacy of an idea derives not from its source, but from its explanatory power, logical coherence, and empirical support.
- **Falsifiability:** Every theory is inherently provisional and perpetually susceptible to refutation or modification by superior evidence or reasoning.
- **Openness to Dialogue:** The space of this discourse is one for the free exchange of ideas, mutual challenge, and collective learning. The university, in its most ideal form, is the institution that embodies this discourse.

In contrast, dogmatic discourse, which constitutes the primary mechanism of "Sacred Ignorance," is characterized by the following features:

- **Self-Legitimation:** The legitimacy of this discourse stems not from its ability to explain the world, but from a source beyond critique—be it religious, ideological, or national. This discourse considers itself the "owner of truth." In the dominant discourse surrounding Israel, this self-legitimation manifests through the "apocalyptic sacralization" of the state within Evangelical theology, as well as the positioning of "shared democratic values" as matters beyond critique.
- **Immunity from Critique:** Its fundamental propositions reside within the realm of the "sacred," and any inquiry or challenge directed at them is interpreted not as a legitimate difference of opinion, but as "heresy," "treason," or "hate-mongering." A concrete example of this mechanism can be observed in the labeling of critics of Israeli policies as "antisemitic," which transfers any legitimate criticism into the sphere of non-debatable matters.
- **Closedness and Certainty:** This discourse belongs to a closed intellectual system that possesses pre-determined answers to all questions and does not tolerate any new data or opposing arguments. In the present case study,

this closedness can be clearly observed in the structural resistance to any revision of U.S. foreign policy towards Israel, despite mounting evidence of the strategic and ethical costs of this relationship.

The key point is that dogmatic discourse can manifest in any guise. Its origin can be a sacred religious text, an ideological book (such as a party manifesto), a national flag, or even a scientific theory that has been transformed into a dogma. What places an idea within the category of "Sacred Ignorance" is not its content, but its function and position within the discourse—that is, when it exits the realm of critique and inquiry and becomes a taboo.

To decisively distinguish "Sacred Ignorance" from merely a firm personal belief or a non-negotiable ethical principle, emphasis must be placed on its socio-power function. Sacred Ignorance emerges when a belief transcends the sphere of individual reasoning or moral conscience and is employed by power institutions (political, religious, academic, media) as an instrument to legitimize the silencing of others and the systematic suppression of rival discourse. In other words, the determining criterion is not the intensity of an individual's belief, but the institutionalized misuse of that belief to intellectually disarm critics and suspend collective rational judgment.

At the level of political discourse, 'Sacred Ignorance' can be understood as a form of cultural securitization, as it transforms rational critique into an existential threat by sacralizing a belief. This process of creating immunity against critique can be analyzed through the lens of securitization theory. Drawing on Guzzini (2011), securitization can be defined as a process where a speech-act frames an issue as an existential threat to a referent object, which in turn justifies breaking free from ordinary political rules and adopting emergency measures. The concept of "Sacred Ignorance" represents a specific and potent form of this process, wherein "critical rationality" and "scientific discourse" themselves are portrayed as existential threats to a sanctified ideological order. Here, the referent object under threat is an ideological "sacred matter," and the extraordinary measure being justified is none other than the systematic suppression of freedom of speech.

This theoretical framework provides the necessary analytical lens for scrutinizing the "special relationship between the United States and Israel." Subsequently, we will demonstrate how the dominant discourse surrounding this relationship, by employing the mechanisms of "Sacred Ignorance"—including the sacralization of Israel within Evangelical political theology and the systematic labeling of critics as "anti-Semitic"—has transformed itself into a dogmatic discourse. This process destroys the space for rational critique and advances the "Genocide of Freedom" at the

heart of Western scientific and democratic institutions. Examining this concrete case will reveal a contemporary manifestation of that historical confrontation between critical rationality and self-legitimizing dogmatism.

Thus, the theory of 'Sacred Ignorance' provides a conceptual tool for understanding how ideological and religious coalitions in U.S. foreign policy have rendered critical rationality an existential threat, thereby obstructing the rational reform of foreign policy and suppressing freedom in domestic politics.

4. Genealogy of 'Sacred Ignorance': From the Inquisition to Modern Totalitarianisms

The primary roots of the suppression of freedom of speech in America and Western countries—especially when one side of the issue involves Israel—are consistently overlooked for various reasons. When the special relationship between the United States and Israel and the unequivocal support for the latter are discussed, the barrage of labels like "anti-Semitic" and the attacks on critics are so intense that an opportunity to examine the historical roots and contextual background of these problems never arises. However, before addressing the core issue, its fundamental underpinnings must be elucidated.

The first question any scholar must ask themselves is: From where does our perception and understanding of the world originate? What factors shape and influence human understanding and beliefs? Although these questions may seem, on the surface, unrelated to U.S. foreign policy, the genocide of freedom of speech, and the suppression of the academic community, they ultimately illuminate the roots of the present problems.

Generally, human understanding of the external world is rooted in three primary sources, which are as follows:

First is **instinct**. Like all animals, humans possess instincts that are innate from birth, with some manifesting upon reaching maturity. Unlike other animals, however, instinct constitutes a very small portion of human understanding of the world.

Second is **knowledge derived from acquired learning**. This constitutes the main distinction between humans and other animals and is what is considered true knowledge. All scientific disciplines and human progress are rooted in acquired learning, which is formed through trial and error, experience, or causal reasoning. Humanity's historical progress has been based precisely on this acquired learning, which has led to the flourishing of human life. The logical and rational thinking attributed to humans, from

which other animals are deprived, essentially pertains to this domain. Theories in international relations, upon which foreign policy is founded and national interests are defined, all stem from rational thinking based on knowledge.

The important and fundamental characteristic of science is that it is measurable, debatable, critiqueable, and falsifiable. If a scientist achieves a result through scientific methods, other scientists can subject these findings to critique and examination, ultimately rejecting or accepting them. There are no limitations in scientific debate and examination, and this very principle has been the bedrock of human progress. Consequently, as long as issues remain within the domain and framework of science, no problem is insurmountable because, supported by intellectual freedom, a solution can ultimately be found for any issue.

Many stop at these two categories in classifying human understanding. However, if we are not atheists, a third source exists, one in which the root of most human problems and the inability to resolve them lies.

Third is **understanding derived from revelation**. Throughout history, religions have emphasized that they have brought a word from God that transcends both instinct and conventional human knowledge. When revelation is invoked, rationality and logic must be set aside, and the sacred principles put forth must be accepted unquestioningly. Revelation and rationality are two entirely opposing epistemes. Although this does not mean that everything presented as revelation is contrary to rational principles, the crux of the matter is that revelation and rationality are of fundamentally different natures, and choosing which one is right in the case of a conflict between science and revelation constitutes one of humanity's great dilemmas.

There is no doubt that all religions—such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, or non-Abrahamic faiths like Buddhism—are fundamentally peaceful in their teachings, and their commandments are founded upon justice, equality, respect for human rights, and the dignity of people. In no sacred text can one find passages endorsing injustice and the slaughter of innocent people. Morality is emphasized extensively within religions, consistently advocating for human equality, the prevention of oppression, and the vision of an ideal society where all humans enjoy equal rights. The emphasis on justice has been a primary source of religion's appeal to the general public. Undoubtedly, humanity's historical progress in ethics is indebted to religions, and it is these very religions that have been the proponents of peace and equality.

However, one must not forget that it is humans who interpret principles and beliefs. Religions themselves have never sought to rule over people, and no

prophet has ever declared themselves the governor of the people. Yet, although religion in its essence does not seek governance, there have invariably been rulers who have consistently utilized religion as a tool to govern the populace. If we assume that religions have spoken correctly about equality and justice, it is possible that the arbitrary interpretation by politicians, aimed at achieving their own desires, results in implemented policies that are in complete contradiction with the actual word of the religion. Consequently, it is no surprise that, despite the multitude of Islamic countries in the world, their modes of governance differ drastically from one another.

Religions, in their rightful place, are profoundly respected. However, the problem arises when rulers attempt to place their own opinions and beliefs on par with revelation and implement these in their policies. Due to the fundamental differences between science and belief derived from revelation, this is extremely dangerous. Beliefs stemming from revelation can become distorted and led astray. In fact, precisely because of the unquestioning adherence of the general public to religious beliefs, this has been attractive to rulers, who throughout history have sought to substitute their own beliefs for religion to pacify the populace, thereby creating Sacred Ignorance. In this scenario, the people no longer had the opportunity to critique these matters and followed these beliefs unconditionally. In the Middle Ages, emphasis was initially placed on what the Gospel said, but eventually, the pronouncements of the Pope and the rulers he endorsed were also classified as divine speech, and opposition to their words became tantamount to opposition to God. History shows that rationality is the perpetual victim of enforced sanctity.

The conflict between "critical reason" and "sanctity-based belief" can also be traced within the Western philosophical tradition. St. Augustine, although he considered reason a divine gift, subordinated it to faith, thereby confining the realm of knowledge within the boundaries of theology (Augustine, 2008). In the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas, by synthesizing Aristotelian philosophy and Christian theology, attempted to reconcile reason and faith, but ultimately also subordinated reason to revealed truth (Aquinas, 1947). This intellectual tradition, in which faith always held primacy over reason, provided the historical groundwork for "Sacred Ignorance" in Christian civilization. In contrast, René Descartes in the 17th century, with his formulation of the principle "*Cogito, ergo sum*" ("I think, therefore I am"), enacted the first radical break from this tradition, establishing knowledge on the basis of methodical doubt and the autonomy of reason (Descartes, 1998). From this perspective, Descartes can be seen as the pivotal point at which reason was liberated from the shackles of sanctity, and the transition from Sacred Ignorance to critical self-awareness began.

The fundamental distinction between the empirical scientific method and revealed knowledge has consistently functioned as a flashpoint of tension in the history of ideas. This opposition can be traced along several key axes:

1. **Source of Legitimacy:** Science derives its validity from falsifiable rationality and empirical evidence, whereas the legitimacy of revelation is assumed to be intrinsic, stemming from the sanctity of its source.
2. **Capacity for Critique:** Scientific propositions are inherently provisional and subject to revision, critique, and falsification. In contrast, revelatory propositions, in fundamentalist readings, are considered infallible and beyond conventional rational judgment.
3. **Epistemic Flexibility:** Science is flexible in the face of new data and can abandon an entire theory. Doctrinal systems based on revelation, however, are resistant to fundamental changes, and their integrity must be preserved as a coherent whole.
4. **Social Consequences of Transgression:** In science, rejecting a theory is a natural process in the advancement of knowledge. Whereas, in the historical context of "Sacred Ignorance," violating revelatory beliefs could be treated as **"**heresy**"** or **"**apostasy**,"** accompanied by severe social and physical punishments (Russell, 1997).
5. **Structure and Relation to Power:** In its most ideal form, science is a collective, decentralized project where truth is shaped through free dialogue and fair competition within a scientific community. In contrast, institutionalized revealed knowledge is often controlled and administered by a centralized authority (such as a clerical institution) which holds a monopoly on the interpretation of ultimate truth. This hierarchical and centralized structure paves the way for the merger of religious and political institutions and its use as a tool for legitimation and the consolidation of hegemony (Asad, 1993).

These structural distinctions, particularly the fifth one, lead to "Sacred Ignorance" when governing institutions, by taking control of or allying with that centralized authority, utilize the characteristics of sanctity, infallibility, and the punishment of transgression to suspend collective rational judgment and systematically suppress critical discourse.

What is clear is that revelation and science (rationality) cannot be contained within a single framework. Gradually, with the proliferation of revelation-like thinking and the establishment of sanctity around various subjects by power-holders, Sacred Ignorance takes shape, creating immunity against any form of criticism. In fact, there are inherent interests within Sacred Ignorance that drive rulers to suppress freedom of speech and silence thinkers to prevent their own interests from being jeopardized. As stated at the outset, Sacred Ignorance is a process in which an idea, ideology, or policy, by being granted an unchallengeable sanctity (religious, national, ethical), is removed from the realm of rationality and scientific critique, and

any opposition to it is construed not as a legitimate difference of opinion, but as a sin, treason, or heresy.

The core problem arises when politicians place their own opinions on par with revelation, disallow their critique and rejection, and, worse, attack critics. This results in an "intellectual dictatorship of the regime" and the inability of the scientific community to voice its views. This intellectual dictatorship occurs through the recourse to revelation-like thinking and reliance on sanctity. In this scenario, revelation is positioned against knowledge. It is possible to witness this even in a liberal democracy based on popular opinion, where the ruling establishment transforms a portion of its political thought into a revelation-like, sacred doctrine and obstructs public criticism of it.

The allure of this mechanism for rulers is so great that they gradually learned to equate certain non-divine subjects—which they did not want the public to interfere in—with revelation, and they would not tolerate the slightest criticism of them. This phenomenon has recurred repeatedly throughout history, and we continue to witness its occurrence. For example, Communist principles in the Soviet Union and other Communist countries were among the beliefs that no one was permitted to criticize. This was despite the fact that many of these very ideas were not present in the writings of Karl Marx at all; it was the officials of the Soviet Union who later imposed their own pronouncements upon the people under the guise of Communism and engaged in their sacralization (Fitzpatrick, 2000). The interests of the rulers determine how dogmatic beliefs are implemented; hence, it is no surprise that even during the Cold War, no two Communist countries in the world were found to be completely identical. The Sino-Soviet split clearly illustrates this point.

Sacralization is a tool that politicians widely employ across various issues. Since knowledge and perception derived from revelation belong to two different domains, the academic community rarely dares to engage with matters that fall within the realm of Sacred Ignorance. As long as these two domains do not come into direct conflict, scientific non-intervention may be a prudent course of action. But if politicians are to treat a mistaken belief as revelation-like and implement it, should scientists simply sit back and observe the proceedings?

Throughout human history, the use of Sacred Ignorance as a tool for political and social control has been a pervasive phenomenon. This phenomenon illustrates the dual power of religion as a source of spirituality and, simultaneously, as an instrument for consolidating despotic power and suppressing freedoms. Rulers and political powers, by sacralizing their own ideas, beliefs, and ideologies, have been able to silence opponents and steer society according to their own design.

Since ancient times, religion has been employed as a source of political legitimacy. In ancient Egypt, the pharaohs considered themselves living gods who possessed a divine right to rule (Assmann, 2001). This approach meant that any opposition to the pharaoh's decrees was interpreted as defiance of the divine will.

In the Middle Ages, interconnected religious and political institutions utilized various tools—including religious censorship, trials and executions based on anti-heresy laws, and the burning of dissidents—to suppress intellectual and verbal opposition. During this period, the Church in Europe held a role that transcended that of a mere religious institution, functioning as a powerful political entity controlling governments and nations. Popes legitimized their power by asserting the "divine right of kings," and opposition to the Church was regarded as both a sin and heresy (Le Goff, 1984). The Middle Ages (approximately the 5th to the 15th century) was an era where the Church and its dependent states played a pivotal role in defining the limits of freedom of thought and expression (Bainton, 2012). Any deviation from the official doctrines or policies of the Church was met with severe punishments through charges of heresy and the immediate denial of the right to expression (Moore, 2000). Among these measures were religious censorship and the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (Index of Prohibited Books). The Catholic Church published the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in 1559 to prevent the spread of "deviant thoughts" (Hindmarsh, 1998). This list included the works of scientists and thinkers such as Galileo, Descartes, and Spinoza (Raven, 2007). Reading or distributing these works was considered a crime, leading to the confiscation of books and the punishment of their authors or distributors (Grafton, 2009).

However, the suppression of freedom of speech and belief did not stop there. In many European regions, even unofficial translations of the Bible without Church approval were prohibited (Peters, 1988). This measure was implemented to preserve doctrinal unity and prevent personal interpretations of the sacred texts (Scribner, 1996). Medieval Europe was rife with inquisitorial courts and book burnings. For instance, the Spanish Inquisition, established in 1478, stands as a prominent example of the collaboration between religion and state to control society (Kamen, 1997). This institution collected and burned prohibited books from libraries and put their authors or readers on trial (Bethencourt, 1997).

The Inquisition was also prevalent in Rome. The Roman Inquisition was established in 1542 by Pope Paul III to confront the Protestant Reformation (Olin, 1991). This committee banned the works of reformist thinkers and suppressed the distribution of any anti-clerical publications (Jedin, 2004). A wide spectrum of anti-heresy laws and the death penalty were also enacted

to suppress freedom of speech and opponents of the Church. The law *De heretico comburendo* was among them.

This period witnessed an institutionalized alliance between the Crown and the Altar, whereby governments, by providing judicial and military backing to the Church, transformed the Inquisition into a full-fledged apparatus of suppression. The English Parliament passed the *De heretico comburendo* law in 1401, under which a charge of heresy could directly result in the punishment of burning at the stake (Harrison, 1994). This law was primarily enforced against the Lollards (followers of John Wycliffe) (Barraclough, 1968). The execution of William Tyndale in 1536 for the crime of translating the Bible into English demonstrates how this mechanism of repression even targeted those seeking to disseminate the sacred texts themselves (Brady, 2009). This approach fostered a climate of fear regarding innovation and inquiry among the general populace (Levy, 2004).

However, the repression extended even beyond freedom of speech and belief. In the Middle Ages, even accusations of freethinking, heterodoxy, and opposition to the Church could be met with the death penalty and burning at the stake. Cases such as the witch-hunts and the *Malleus Maleficarum* are prime examples. In the Middle Ages, a common tool for social suppression was accusing individuals of witchcraft. In essence, labeling dissidents could have fatal consequences. The book *Malleus Maleficarum*, written by Heinrich Kramer in 1487, served as a manual for the trial and punishment of witches (Levack, 2013). This book specifically targeted women, considering them particularly susceptible to witchcraft (Barstow, 1994). Many individuals, predominantly defenseless women or those who opposed the powerful, were arrested, tortured, and burned based on this book's directives.

During this dark historical period, any form of thinking differently from the Church carried terrible repercussions. The case of the Cathars is one such instance. The Cathars were a group holding views different from official Christianity. They believed in a duality of good and evil in the universe and considered the Catholic Church corrupt (Wakefield & Evans, 1991). In the early 13th century, the Church launched a crusade against them, leading to genocide in regions like Languedoc, France (Roach, 1970). This religious war aimed not only to destroy a religious sect but also to consolidate the power of the Church and its dependent states.

A crucial point about this era is that many individuals targeted by the Church and the tyrannical rulers it supported were not opponents of Christianity; on the contrary, they were among the most devout believers in the Bible and the principles of Christ within their communities. However, because they criticized the Church's corruption, they were attacked with various labels and ultimately killed. The case of Jan Hus and the reformation

in Bohemia exemplifies this. Jan Hus, a priest from Bohemia (modern-day Czech Republic), was a staunch critic of the Church's corruption. He called for religious reforms and a return to the principles of the Bible (Spinka, 1966). The Church initially invited him to a debate but subsequently arrested him at the Council of Constance (1415) and burned him at the stake on charges of heresy (Fudge, 1998). The death of Jan Hus sparked reform movements in Central Europe and had long-term effects on Protestantism.

The medieval Church, through the mechanism of the Inquisition, consolidated not merely a discursive hegemony but a comprehensive political-economic monopoly. Within this framework, the suppression of dissent was a perfectly rational move by a ruling oligarchy to preserve its monopoly on power and wealth.

Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that the widespread corruption of the medieval Church and the consequences of its suppression ultimately spurred the intellectual development of modern Europe. Despite the Church's efforts to suppress freedom of speech, movements such as the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution emerged in subsequent centuries. These transformations were the result of the endeavors of intellectuals who, despite immense pressure, continued their pursuit of truth (Burke, 2000). In fact, severe repression ultimately provoked even stronger reactions and fundamental revisions of systems of knowledge and power.

In the Middle Ages, Sacred Ignorance was employed as a tool for state legitimation to suppress individual and intellectual freedoms. The trial, censorship, and even execution of intellectual opponents were signs of political power's dependence on religious institutions. However, these very pressures laid the groundwork for reformist and liberatory movements in the modern era. History has shown that whenever sanctity replaces rationality, the first casualty is truth.

The instrumental use of beliefs is not confined to religion alone. With the rise of modern ideologies, sacralization manifested in new forms. Particularly in the Communist regimes of the 20th century, Marxist-Leninist ideology became a kind of "secular religion" whose all principles and tenets were considered beyond critique and revision (Fitzpatrick, 2000). Communist leaders, using party doctrine, labeled any opposition as hostility towards the "path of the revolution" and suppressed dissenters. This sacralization placed the scientific and academic community under severe pressure, prohibiting any thought that deviated from the party line (Applebaum, 2012). This clearly demonstrates a direct correlation between intellectual despotism and sanctity-making, as rulers can use this tool for

intellectual suppression and to prevent thinking outside their desired framework.

The sacralization of political ideas necessitates the creation of an intellectual framework wherein criticism of fundamental principles is interpreted as heresy or treason. This framework is often reinforced through propaganda, compulsory education, censorship, and the application of violence against critics (Scott, 1990). In this process, religion or ideology becomes sanctified, turning into a "political revelation," the breaking of which is considered not only a political crime but also a moral and even religious transgression. Such a structure permits no criticism or reform and paves the way for intellectual despotism and the suppression of free speech (Arendt, 1951).

The pattern of sacralization has been used repeatedly throughout history, leading to intellectual tyranny. The medieval Church and the Pope himself are prime examples of religion controlling politics. Popes, using the title "Vicar of God," were able to pressure local governments and even depose kings (Duffy, 1997). The Soviet regime and the Communist Party, by sanctifying Marxism-Leninism and shielding it from criticism, ensured that any opposition was swiftly suppressed. The suppression of intellectuals, scientists, and academics was a clear manifestation of this process (Fitzpatrick, 2000). In the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, the sacralization of party ideology served a thoroughly realist function: legitimizing the rule of a party minority and justifying the suppression of all political competition under the guise of fighting imaginary enemies. Even Nazi Germany utilized a racial ideology for its horrific actions. The Nazis sanctified racial ideology, and this sanctification facilitated the severe suppression of minorities and opponents, including the genocide of the Jewish people (Kershaw, 2008).

This historical sequence clearly demonstrates that the essence of Sacred Ignorance remains constant; only its guise and tools have modernized. Evidence indicates that the sacralization of political ideas and beliefs is one of the most effective instruments of suppression and control. History is a graveyard of ideas where sanctity replaced rationality. This process frames dissent and critique as a serious threat to the ruling power and, by suppressing the scientific community, severely constricts democratic space and freedom of expression. Sacred Ignorance can be defined as a cognitive-ideological mechanism through which power systems, by sacralizing ideas, block the frontiers of critical rationality.

Throughout history, despots have feared critique and free speech because intellectual freedom means questioning the tyranny of the tyrants, and this terrifies rulers. Consequently, the best tool for autocrats is to establish an intellectual framework to prevent free thinking and freedom of speech,

which manifests itself in the form of Sacred Ignorance. Freedom of speech is only meaningful when it is for speech that someone does not want to hear.

This historical examination shows that the sacralization of power has always been accompanied by the elimination of intellectual freedom. In the contemporary era, this process has continued in the form of political and ideological sanctity; the very phenomenon that is now being reproduced in the suppression of critical discourse within Western liberal societies, particularly regarding Israel. This genealogy reveals that "Sacred Ignorance" has always been the weapon of ruling oligarchies to justify their monopolistic pursuits. In the next section, we will demonstrate how, in the present age, a new coalition of political-religious oligarchies in the United States, utilizing the same historical mechanisms, has transformed Israel into a new "sacred matter" to consolidate its hegemony in both domestic and international spheres.

5. Case Study: The U.S.-Israel Special Relationship as a Realm of 'Sacred Ignorance'

The confrontation between critical and dogmatic discourse acquires deeper dimensions when viewed through the lens of political realism. From a realist perspective, "Sacred Ignorance" is not merely an intellectual phenomenon but an effective tool for consolidating power and perpetuating the interests of stakeholder groups. We now turn to the analysis of a concrete exemplar of this combined theory: the special relationship between the United States and Israel. We will demonstrate how the twin mechanisms of labeling and sacralization, alongside the structural influence of lobbies, not only construct a "dogmatic discourse" but also erect a strategic barrier against any rational revision of foreign policy—a revision that actors perceive could threaten their tangible interests. This analysis frames the suppression of freedom of speech not as a cultural difference of opinion, but as the objective manifestation of a clash between interests and ideology in the arena of power.

Although historical instances of Sacred Ignorance were often rooted in religious institutions, the phenomenon has persisted in the modern era in the form of secular ideologies and geopolitical alliances. One of the most prominent contemporary examples is the special relationship between the United States and Israel. This section examines how this relationship, while ostensibly based on strategic interests, has in practice acquired many characteristics of "Sacred Ignorance," thereby restricting the space for critique at the very heart of Western democracies. Sacred Ignorance is a cancer upon civilization; quiet and insidious, yet lethal. One must recognize

that the Inquisition never truly vanished from history; it merely changed its attire.

The United States is Israel's primary political, economic, and military patron. The special relationship between the United States and Israel has consistently been recognized as one of the most enduring and contentious political alliances in the international system. While many of the United States' foreign relations are governed by geopolitical considerations and rational national interests, the relationship with Israel frequently transcends this logic. Numerous scholars have argued that this special bond was formed and has persisted not based on political rationality, but under the influence of powerful lobbies, the suppression of legitimate criticism through labeling it "anti-Semitic," and the sway of apocalyptic religious thought in America (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007; Butler, 2012; Chomsky, 1999).

Proponents of the special U.S.-Israel relationship argue that this alliance is founded on shared democratic values, vital security interests in the unstable Middle East region, and cultural ties (Foxman, 2007). From this perspective, Israel is a stable strategic ally in a region where U.S. interests are constantly challenged. They also argue that supporting Israel's existence is a moral response to the long history of anti-Semitism, particularly the Holocaust. However, the central question remains: must these arguments lead to silence in the face of any criticism of the specific policies of the Israeli government? In other words, can one simultaneously condemn anti-Semitism and support Israel's security while offering legitimate criticism of this state's actions towards the Palestinians? Does our opposition to child abuse mean children are free to act without consequences? Does supporting women's rights mean women are above the law and can oppress others? Does criticizing the policies of the Russian or Chinese government equate to hatred of their people? These are questions for which the powerful have no answer, and it is evident that when politicians lack a reasoned argument, they resort to labels. The crucial distinction between 'critiquing a state' and 'hating a people' is the most fundamental distinction in any liberal society. The deliberate conflation of these two concepts is not only a betrayal of the actual victims of anti-Semitism but also a clear sign of the moral bankruptcy of a political discourse that can no longer defend its positions through rational argument.

In their seminal work *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt (2007) demonstrate that the unconditional support of the United States for Israel, even when it runs counter to U.S. security and economic interests, can only be explained by the structural influence of the Israel Lobby. This lobby is a constellation of organizations, think tanks, religious groups, and political action committees (PACs) that exerts influence on American foreign policy by deploying vast financial

resources and penetrating media and congressional channels (Walt & Mearsheimer, 2006). This financial influence is quantifiably and objectively traceable. According to data from OpenSecrets, during the 2022 election cycle, PACs and individuals associated with pro-Israel advocates injected over $26 million into the campaigns of congressional candidates and party committees. This level of political investment clearly constitutes a key mechanism for purchasing access and fostering commitment among American legislators, effectively illustrating the lobby's structural influence (OpenSecrets, 2024).

This article does not seek to re-explore or analyze the specifics of the U.S.-Israel special relationship itself, as extensive research already exists on the topic, and the primary focus here is on the suppression of freedom within America. However, as Mearsheimer and Walt argue, the special relationship transcends conventional analytical frameworks in international relations. Consequently, given the costly nature of this relationship, its continuation can only be justified through Sacred Ignorance. As previously discussed, human understanding of the world is rooted in three categories: instinct, knowledge derived from trial and error (rationality), and understanding stemming from revelation. In essence, the special relationship between the U.S. and Israel cannot be described as a rational one based on the national interest of the United States, because in many instances it has not only failed to align with Washington's interests but has, in some cases, even contradicted Israel's own interests.

Although this article does not intend to immerse itself in re-examining the background of the "special relationship"—which has been sufficiently investigated by scholars like Mearsheimer and Walt (2007)—it utilizes their analytical framework as a springboard. Their argument that this relationship transcends conventional frameworks of international relations is the point of departure here: the central question is not "What is this relationship?" but rather "How does it persist despite its astronomical costs?"

The answer proposed by this article, formulated within the theory of "Sacred Ignorance," is that justifying this relationship hinges on the suspension of instrumental rationality. As outlined earlier in the genealogy of human knowledge, action can stem from instinct, rationality (acquired knowledge), or belief derived from revelation. Overwhelming evidence—from unprecedented financial aid to unilateral diplomatic support—indicates that this relationship cannot be explained within a framework of rationality and pure national interest calculus. In some instances, these policies have even directly conflicted with Israel's own long-term security interests. Therefore, its continuity becomes comprehensible only within the framework of "Sacred Ignorance"—that is, the transfer of this alliance from the realm of rationality to the realm of sanctified, unchallengeable beliefs.

A prime example of this is the Iraq War of 2003, which, despite explicit opposition from many U.S. security experts who argued it contradicted national interests, was justified with widespread support from pro-Israel groups—as documented by Mearsheimer and Walt (2007). This paradox itself testifies to the claim that if this relationship fit within a framework of strategic rationality, there would be no need for influential lobbies like AIPAC to impose it. In fact, lobbies enter the fray precisely when a policy lacks intrinsic rational justification. The function of lobbies is not to facilitate a logical process, but to distort the decision-making process to substitute particular interests for the public good. In other words, lobbying is the art of transforming particular interests into universal values.

This special relationship has had multiple consequences for America. On one hand, the global image of the United States has been severely damaged, and the country is perceived as Israel's unqualified partner in the suppression of Palestinians (Chomsky, 1999). On the other hand, the financial and security costs of this relationship for the U.S. have been enormous, without yielding significant strategic gains (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007).

Quantitative documentation clearly confirms this claim. According to a report by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), total direct U.S. aid to Israel from its founding until 2023 has reached approximately $158 billion (in constant dollars), the majority of which has been in the form of military grants (Sharp, 2023, p. 1). Israel is recognized as the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign assistance since World War II. This level of financial support, particularly in the form of grants, lacks a clear strategic justification within a framework of pure U.S. national interest.

Indeed, although the special relationship with Israel is not strategic for Washington and cannot be justified by rationality, power lobbies utilize their tools to prevent any damage to this relationship and any criticism of it. This amounts to a blank check for Israel, insulating the country from criticism regardless of its actions and ensuring a continuous flow of extensive U.S. support. For the Middle East, this alliance has meant the reinforcement of a cycle of violence, the weakening of the peace process, and increased instability. The unconditional U.S. support for Israel has also increased the motivation of extremist groups to attack U.S. interests (Chomsky, 2015).

In reality, the special relationship between the United States and Israel can be viewed as a form of "secular sacred covenant," wherein the boundaries between politics, faith, and ideology have dissolved. This relationship is founded not merely on material interests, but on a quasi-religious narrative of historical and moral mission. As Carl Schmitt reminds us, the key concepts of modern political theory are secularized theological concepts; from this perspective, the U.S.-Israel relationship reproduces the same

theological logic in a geopolitical guise (Schmitt, 2005). In this system, Israel becomes the symbol of the "political sacred," and the United States plays the role of the "guardian of the faith." Critiquing this relationship is thus regarded as a critique of faith itself and is consequently suppressed through security and ethical mechanisms. This entanglement of religion and politics, particularly within Evangelical political theology, has rendered critical rationality not only ineffective in the face of the authority of sanctity but also "sinful." Thus, "Sacred Ignorance" here is not an intellectual deviation, but the ideological pillar of the contemporary Western political-religious order.

Given that the continuation of the "special relationship" fails any rational cost-benefit calculation, the coalition supporting it has been compelled to resort to mechanisms beyond reasoned argument. These mechanisms, which lie at the heart of the "Sacred Ignorance" theory, operate in two main strands:

1. The use of the "anti-Semitic" label against any criticism of Israeli government policies and the special relationship between the United States and Israel.
2. Apocalyptic views concerning the establishment of Israel, the return of Christ, and sacralization.

In summary, the special relationship between the United States and Israel cannot be explained based on geopolitical rationality or the national interest of the United States. This relationship is largely the product of powerful lobby influence, the suppression of dissent through the labeling of "anti-Semitism," and ideological legitimation by apocalyptic Evangelical currents. Next, we will analyze these two key mechanisms—labeling and sacralization.

5-1. First Mechanism: The "anti-Semitism" Label as a Cipher for Suppressing Critical Discourse

The mechanism of suppressing critical discourse through labeling is rooted in the ancient history of "Sacred Ignorance." Today, this strategy has re-emerged in a new guise at the heart of Western democracies and within the American academic sphere: the systematic equation of any criticism of the Israeli government with "anti-Semitism."

Here, a decisive distinction must be made: anti-Semitism as a documented historical crime is an undeniable reality. However, the instrumental misuse of this concept to silence critical voices is not only a betrayal of its actual victims but also constitutes a new form of a repressive mechanism in itself.

The history of Europe—and more broadly, Western civilization—is stained by a dark thread of systematic and violent anti-Semitism. Although the Holocaust stands as the apex of this crime in collective memory, the reality is that the persecution and humiliation of Jews as a religious minority had shaped the social structure of Europe for centuries prior. Condemning this history of injustice is not only a moral imperative but a prerequisite for any serious discussion about freedom of conscience. Promoting and defending the right to religious freedom for adherents of all faiths—including Judaism—is a cornerstone of any modern and just society.

In antiquity, Jews were typically considered a religious minority whose monotheistic faith distinguished them from other peoples. In the Babylonian Empire, Jews were exiled after the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem in the 6th century BCE. This was the first major experience of organized persecution, later repeated in the Roman Empire (Johnson, 1987). During the Roman Empire, Jewish resistance to Roman rule and their adherence to Judaism led to confrontation with Roman authorities. The Great Jewish Revolt (66-73 CE) and the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132-136 CE) were met with brutal suppression, resulting in the destruction of the Second Temple and the diaspora of the Jewish people (Bauer, 2001).

Subsequently, with the formalization of Christianity in the Roman Empire, Jews were vilified as "Christ-killers." The Catholic Church propagated a negative image of Jews, holding them responsible for the death of Christ. This religious outlook laid the groundwork for civil and economic restrictions and the creation of compulsory ghettos (Wistrich, 1991). During the Crusades, many Jewish communities in Europe fell victim to Christian violence. In 1096, concurrent with the First Crusade, thousands of Jews were killed in cities such as Mainz, Cologne, and Worms (Katz, 1994).

In the 14th century, the spread of the Black Death led to accusations that Jews were poisoning wells. These rumors resulted in thousands of Jews being burned alive or forced to flee (Cohn-Sherbok, 2002). In 1492, with the issuance of the Alhambra Decree by Isabella and Ferdinand, Jews in Spain were forced to leave the country or convert. This expulsion is considered a historical milestone in the persecution of Jews (Johnson, 1987).

In the early modern period, Jews in many European cities were confined to special districts known as ghettos and faced restrictions on civil rights, education, and property ownership. This enforced segregation was not only physical but also cultural (Wistrich, 1991). From the 19th century onward, with the rise of nationalism, racist views supplanted religious attitudes. Jews were accused of controlling the economy, media, and politics. In France, the Dreyfus Affair illustrated structural antagonism towards Jews (Bauer, 2001). In the 20th century, with the rise of the Nazis in Germany, a racist anti-Semitic ideology became state policy. During the Holocaust, over

six million Jews were murdered in death camps such as Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Dachau. This genocide is the greatest catastrophe in Jewish history and represents the pinnacle of anti-Semitism (Katz, 1994).

Consequently, it must be stated that the persecution of Jews and anti-Semitism are phenomena deeply rooted in various historical, religious, social, and political contexts. From Babylon and Rome to Europe and Nazi Germany, Jews have been victims of bigotry and violence for diverse reasons, and there is no doubt about this. However, what we are witnessing now in the West, and particularly in America, is the instrumental use of anti-Semitism to suppress freedom of speech and prevent criticism of Israel. There is no doubt about the immense suffering of Jews throughout history, and unfortunately, anti-Semitism has recurred repeatedly. Nevertheless, this does not mean it should become a tool in the hands of political currents and lobbies to suppress any legitimate criticism by wielding anti-Semitism as a weapon. It must be understood that the primary tool of the Israel Lobby for cementing the special relationship is restricting critical discourse. Judaism and Zionism are systematically equated in public discourse, and any criticism of Israeli policies is labeled as "anti-Semitism" (Butler, 2012). When the fear of being labeled replaces the courage to think, the gradual death of reason begins**.**

5-1-1. the Threefold Distinction: Critiquing Policy, Judaism, and Zionism

To understand the mechanism of suppression more precisely, it is essential to draw a clear threefold distinction between "criticism of the Israeli government," "Judaism as a religion," and "Zionism as a political ideology." This distinction is not only analytically correct but is also actively promoted by Jewish groups themselves.

First, the existence of anti-Zionist Zionism and critical Jews: The claim that all Jews are unconditional supporters of the Israeli government is an inaccurate and anti-Semitic stereotype. For instance, fundamentalist Orthodox Jewish groups like Neturei Karta, based on specific interpretations of sacred texts, believe that establishing a Jewish state before the coming of the Messiah (Mashiach) is illegitimate and sinful, and they actively oppose Zionism and the State of Israel (Winston, 2019). Beyond these specific groups, more modern organizations such as Jewish Voice for Peace**,** and even some rabbis within the Reform and Conservative movements, condemn the Israeli government's policies towards Palestinians due to violations of human rights and Jewish ethical principles (Berman, 2021). This diversity of viewpoints exposes the falsehood of the "Jewish-Zionist unity" myth.

Second, an alternative definition of anti-Semitism: The broad and ambiguous definition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which considers criticism of Israel as potentially anti-Semitic, has become a primary tool for silencing critics. In opposition to this definition, a group of Jewish scholars and activists have proposed an alternative called the **"**Nexus Definition**."** Promoted by the "Against anti-Semitism" project, this definition clearly states that "anti-Semitism is discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jews as Jews," and explicitly affirms that "criticism of Zionism, Israel, its policies, or its institutions is not, in and of itself, anti-Semitic" (Against anti-Semitism, 2021). This definition draws a bright red line between combating real anti-Semitism and defending the right to political critique.

Third, distinguishing the Israel Lobby from American Jews: The Israel Lobby, particularly the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), is a political entity with specific goals that does not claim to represent the interests of all American Jews and should not be perceived as such. Polling data consistently shows that the American Jewish community is highly polarized and diverse regarding the Israeli government and its policies. For example, a comprehensive survey by the Pew Research Center in 2021 found that only 58% of American Jews feel emotionally attached to Israel, while 26% feel neutral and 15% feel distant. Furthermore, only 52% believe the Israeli government is making a sincere effort towards peace (Pew Research Center, 2021). Another poll by JewBelong in 2023 indicated that 40% of American Jews believe Israel is committing "genocide" or "apartheid" (JewBelong, 2023). These data clearly prove that the positions of political lobbies like AIPAC do not reflect the unanimous views of the American Jewish community, and using these lobbies as proxies for all Jewry is itself a form of antisemitic stereotyping.

Additionally, a Washington Post poll (September 2025) shows that about 61% of American Jews believe Israel has committed war crimes in Gaza. 39% also say Israel may have committed genocide against Palestinians. In the same poll, Jews were almost evenly divided: 46% support Israel's military actions in Gaza and 48% oppose them. A University of California / University of Rochester poll also indicates that 31% of American Jews support Israel's military operations in Gaza, while 58% oppose them. These statistics reveal a deep schism within a community historically close to Israel.

With the chasm revealed between reality (the diversity of Jewish opinions) and the dominant discourse (the claim of unity), we must now ask: How does this unrealistic labeling nevertheless function so effectively? The answer lies in analyzing this phenomenon not as a passing error, but as the continuation of a historical pattern of discourse control, now reproduced in modern forms.

5-1-2. The Label as a Mechanism of Power: From the Securitization of Discourse to Institutionalized Suppression

Judith Butler, in her works and recent interviews, explains how the expansive definition of anti-Semitism by institutions like the IHRA effectively suppresses freedom of speech and excludes critics of Israel from universities and media (Butler, 2025). This process has made criticizing Israeli policies costly even for moderate academics and politicians in the American public sphere (Chomsky, 2015). From the perspective of this article's framework, this labeling process is precisely the "securitization" of critical discourse mentioned earlier; where legitimate political criticism is transformed into an "existential threat" to a sanctified ideological order, thereby justifying its extraordinary and extra-legal suppression. Consequently, a policy that is indefensible from a rational perspective continues unchallenged politically due to the fear of the "anti-Semite" label and its devastating repercussions.

Since the special relationship between the U.S. and Israel—which has now morphed into U.S. support for the genocide of Palestinians—is irrational, there remains no option but to use the label of antisemitism for any criticism of Israel to silence dissenting voices. The power lobbies are the new guardians of the temple; they determine what is sacred and what is blasphemy. The regulatory functions of the Israel Lobby are comparable to the mechanisms of intellectual control in historical periods, which, with their apocalyptic ideologies, are burning the interests of both the U.S. and Israel, while domestically violating the freedom of speech of the American people. Just as the medieval Church accused anyone speaking of science of opposing God's commands and revelation, deeming the critic worthy of the pyre with such a label, the powerful blob and Israel Lobby now attack their critics by labeling them anti-Semitic and depriving them of a wide range of social privileges.

Structural similarities in the mechanisms of discourse control are observable between historical institutions like the medieval Church and contemporary entities like lobbies. The label of antisemitism is now the most common tool in the 21st century for the systematic marginalization of critical voices. As Michel Foucault explains in his analysis of power and discourse, repression in the modern world occurs not through physical violence, but through the control of meaning and language. Power silences opponents without the need for brute force by determining the boundaries of what is "sayable." From this perspective, the accusation of "antisemitism" in the Western political and academic sphere has assumed a function similar to the tools of the Inquisition in the Middle Ages; a tool for legitimizing the intellectual elimination and stigmatization of critics.

This process of suppression is so systematic that even Jewish critics—who, by definition, possess inherent immunity against the charge of antisemitism—are not spared. This clearly demonstrates that the real target is not fighting prejudice, but silencing the very act of criticism itself, irrespective of the critic's identity or arguments. Creating such a "safe space" for politicians exempts them from feedback and accountability and encourages them to make increasingly dangerous decisions. The objective consequences of this intellectual suffocation can be clearly observed in the escalating violence in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as the spread of conflict to other countries in the region, including Israeli attacks on 6 countries in the Middle East, which includes Qatar, a close ally of the United States.

This logic of repression knows no borders. The continuation of the Gaza war despite orders from the International Criminal Court, coupled with hostile attacks by U.S. Senators and governmental sanctions against this guardian of international justice, shows that no person or institution—even at the highest levels—is safe from accusation. The pinnacle of this phenomenon can be seen in the statement by Israel Katz, Israel's Foreign Minister, who labeled Pedro Sánchez, the Prime Minister of Spain, an "accomplice to inciting the genocide of Jews" for recognizing the State of Palestine EFE-EPA. (2024). This accusation, which bears no relation to Sánchez's action even by the most basic rational standards, clearly shows that "antisemitism" has become a full-fledged code: any independent action outside the established red lines is mercilessly "excommunicated." Naturally, in such an atmosphere, any critic—from politician to university professor—would fear speaking the truth.

Regarding the accusation of antisemitism, it is essential to note several points. First, the greatest mistake being deliberately perpetuated in Western societies is equating Israel with Judaism. This is the greatest injustice to the world's Jews because Israeli politicians do not govern based on Jewish teachings; rather, their behavior stems from the personal principles and ideologies of the politicians and their parties, and secularist thought. Consequently, no Jew in the world is equivalent to Israel. No Jew living in America or other countries is complicit in Israel's actions, just as no Muslim in the West is considered complicit in the actions of rulers in Middle Eastern Islamic countries. Equating Israel and Judaism is a great injustice that can exacerbate antisemitism, while not all Jews support Israel and, more importantly, have no role in its policies. The equation of Judaism and Israel is purposefully promoted by the Israel Lobby and the blob to prevent any criticism of Tel Aviv and U.S. policy towards Israel. This is as meaningless as labeling criticism of the policies of Iran and Arab countries in the Middle East as "Islam phobia."

This is while, according to a recent Washington Post poll, four in 10 US Jews believe Israel is committing genocide, while more than 60 percent say Israel has committed war crimes in Gaza. This correctly indicates a diversity of views among American Jews regarding Israel's policies, and they are not necessarily unconditional supporters of this country's policies due to their religion. Therefore, anyone else in the American academic community who opposes these policies is thinking in line with Jewish citizens, and their criticism is not antisemitism.

As Judith Butler—a prominent philosopher with roots in the history of Jewish suffering—argues unequivocally: "Criticism of Israel should not be considered antisemitism in any way" (Butler, 2003). From Butler's perspective, the core problem is the "conflation of criticism of Israel with antisemitism"; a process that not only limits freedom of speech but, by blurring the line between legitimate political criticism and real racial discrimination, ultimately also harms the fight against genuine antisemitism by eroding societal sensitivity to it (Butler, 2012). How can one equate a student's or professor's criticism of Israel's wrong policies with a racist individual's attack on a synagogue and harm to innocent Jews? When any criticism of the special relationship between the U.S. and Israel—which is sometimes detrimental to both countries—is widely met with the label of antisemitism, sensitivity towards actions that are truly anti-Semitic, such as attacks on Jewish citizens, diminishes.

It is noteworthy that the targets of these labels are not only non-Jews. Even Jewish organizations like "Jewish Voice for Peace" and progressive Zionist groups like "Zioness" are frequently targeted with the same accusations. This fact reveals that the goal of the dominant discourse is not protecting Jews from antisemitism, but "immunizing" the Israeli state against any political feedback and accountability. It is at this point that the legitimate criticism of a state is artificially and dangerously tied to racial discrimination.

This instrumental use of the antisemitism accusation is not merely a debating tactic; it is a mechanism of power employed to control discourse. From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, which Guzzini (2013) supports, "power is exerted not only through force but through the production of meaning and the determination of the boundaries of what is sayable" (p. 7). The label "anti-Semite" serves precisely this function: it redefines the boundaries of legitimate discourse, expels any criticism of Israel from the realm of logical debate, and exiles it to the realm of the unspeakable. Thus, this dominant discourse immunizes itself from confronting rival arguments.

In recent decades, with the growth of Palestine solidarity movements and criticism of Israeli policies, reactions have emerged that seek to equate

criticism of Israel with antisemitism within the American academic community. This approach, manifested in U.S. policy and particularly in universities and academic centers, has led to the restriction of free speech and the suppression of critical views. This has caused many universities, fearing budget cuts and political pressure, to refrain from supporting and hosting discussions and programs related to criticizing Israeli policies (Williams, 2021). Currently, the U.S. Department of Education and some academic institutions use the definition of "antisemitism" provided by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). These definitions consider some forms of criticism of Israel that are disproportionately or prejudicially linked to Jews as antisemitism (ADL, 2016; IHRA, 2016). These definitions and standards pressure universities and higher education institutions to adopt countermeasures against what is considered "antisemitism." As a result, some criticisms of Israeli policies are identified as a form of antisemitism and face persecution or prohibition (Scholz, 2020).

What is clear is that the real anti-Semites and those inciting antisemitism in the world are the politicians and individuals who equate Israel with Judaism. Real antisemitism is the instrumental use of Jewish suffering. Although these individuals ostensibly care about Israel's interests, their behavior in fact causes the greatest damage to the image of Jews. Nowhere in Jewish texts is the mass killing of innocent civilians justified; it is the right-wing Israeli politicians who, based on their own ideologies, implement aggressive policies against Palestinians, not based on Jewish teachings. Therefore, equating Israel's actions with Judaism is a grave mistake that fuels antisemitism against innocent people. The Israel Lobby does not represent a religion or ethnicity; this lobby represents a political ideology that lobbies in the U.S. regarding Israel's interests in a revelatory, non-rational manner, and its membership includes a wide range of politicians and individuals from Evangelical Christians to conservatives.

If the United States treated Israel like a normal country and pressured Tel Aviv to accept the two-state solution, the October 7th attack would not have occurred. Israel claims that an independent Palestinian state is impossible due to Hamas's existence, but the truth is that Hamas emerged and gained support among Palestinians precisely because of the Israeli authorities' resistance to accepting a Palestinian state. This movement formed in the late 1980s. If Israel had moved towards a two-state solution after the 1967 war, the conflict with the Palestinians would have ended. Subsequently, America's blank check to Israel has strengthened the right-wing in that country and marginalized politicians supporting the resolution of the Palestinian conflict. Now, senior Israeli officials openly speak of destroying the plan for an independent Palestinian state and support displacing millions of civilians to other countries; an issue that can clearly escalate tensions and even lead to antisemitism against innocent Jews in the West.

No one doubts that Jews were subjected to genocide by Nazi Germany during the Holocaust, but does that mean anyone who criticizes the mistaken policies of the U.S. towards Israel and its right-wing government is an anti-Semite seeking the destruction of Jews? What connection is there between criticizing the mistakes of politicians and the Jewish community? The more transparently this issue is critiqued, the certain result is that the interests of U.S. political officials and the Israel Lobby lie in suppressing critics. Unable to debate and defend this issue with reason, they are forced to isolate critics and ostracize researchers and scholars to such an extent that it prevents similar voices from emerging in the future. The suppression of critical academics is a self-admission of the inability to rationally defend their positions. Yet, they have been tremendously successful in this endeavor, and the American academic community is now sterile on this issue, with only a handful of critics like John Mearsheimer able to openly critique the status quo.

It must be emphasized that U.S. Middle East policy is not based on acquired knowledge, but on "understanding derived from revelation"—or "Sacred Ignorance." If it were not, Washington should have learned from its decades of trial and error in the region and avoided repeating disasters. Just as the medieval Church excommunicated and consigned its critics to the flames for violating "Sacred Ignorance," today any rational argument about the relationship between Washington and Tel Aviv is met with the label of "antisemitism" and vilification. Naturally, in such an atmosphere, even the renowned American academic community succumbs to silence in the face of the atrocities in Gaza and the suppression of students. Every researcher is acutely aware that any critical writing will have devastating professional and social consequences. Yet, precisely for this reason, writing it becomes a scientific and ethical necessity. Because in a world where truth burns in the sacred fire of politics, the intellectual's mission is not silence, but to kindle a flame arising from reason and justice, not from sanctity and fear.

5-2. The Second Mechanism: Ideological Sacralization and Apocalyptic Theology

The second mechanism sustaining the "special relationship" is rooted in a fundamentally different belief: apocalyptic theology. Here, support for Israel is justified not on the basis of geopolitical calculations, but as a religious duty. While a minority of Jews support these policies, the heaviest burden of this ideology is borne by the tens-of-millions-strong community of American Evangelical Christians, who see Israel as the focal point for the fulfillment of biblical prophecies and the return of Christ. If the first mechanism (the antisemitism label) operates through fear, the second mechanism sacralizes the U.S.-Israel relationship by leveraging apocalyptic hope and dread. This mechanism, reinforced by Evangelical political theology, has transformed Israel from a strategic ally into a sacred symbol in the divine plan.

Evangelicals, a branch of conservative Christianity in America, have been recognized as one of the most powerful political groups in recent decades (Wilcox & Robinson, 2011). They have made strict religious beliefs and strong support for Israel central to their politics (Lindholm, 2017). Utilizing media networks, raising large sums of money, and organizing voters, this group plays a significant role in shaping America's conservative domestic and foreign policies (Green, 2010). Evangelicals and the Israel Lobby often work synergistically to reinforce pro-Israel policies and suppress scholarly criticism and free speech (Burdick, 2014).

Although freedom of speech and academic freedom are fundamental pillars of any democratic society and have always been part of the national identity and academic institutions of the United States, in recent decades, the emergence of a particular ideological current among American Christian fundamentalists, especially Zionist Evangelicals, has created an atmosphere where free speech, particularly regarding criticism of Israeli government policies, has been severely restricted (Science, 2022). Evangelical Christians, particularly those with Zionist leanings, believe that the return of Jews to the Holy Land and the establishment of the State of Israel are precursors to the second coming of Jesus Christ. Consequently, they view unconditional support for the State of Israel not as a political choice, but as a religious duty (Harlan, 2023). This apocalyptic mindset, rooted in the Bible and specific interpretations thereof, has deeply infiltrated American policymaking and, through financial, media, and political tools, has become a restraining force against any criticism of Israel. *Sanctity is the last refuge of organized ignorance.*

From the perspective of this article's framework, this apocalyptic reading serves as a mechanism of "self-legitimation" for the pro-Israel political discourse. Since the legitimacy of this stance derives not from political rationality, security calculations, or global ethics, but from the "will and promise of God," any criticism against it is interpreted not as a legitimate difference of opinion, but as opposition to God's plan. This is the very process described in the "Sacred Ignorance" theory, which removes discourse from the realm of rational critique and turns it into an unquestionable taboo.

In the United States, Evangelical Christians, particularly their Zionist faction, have leveraged extensive financial resources to exert significant influence on the country's domestic and foreign policies. These funds come not only from individual donations by millions of religious believers but also include massive contributions from charities, churches, television networks, and conservative wealthy individuals (Spector, 2009). By various estimates, the American Evangelical community numbers between 60 and 80 million people, a large portion of whom are staunch supporters of Israel. This vast social base, in addition to voting in elections, plays a crucial role in funding

election campaigns, lobbying, media advertising, and establishing educational and research institutions (Goldberg, 2006).

Unlike secular societies, Zionist Evangelicals draw their financial motivation from a firm religious conviction. This support manifests in various ways, including financial aid to Israeli organizations, payments to municipalities of Jewish settlers in the West Bank, funding trips of American politicians to Israel, and creating propaganda institutions in defense of Netanyahu's government policies. One of the most prominent Evangelical organizations in this field is "Christians United for Israel" (CUFI), led by John Hagee. Founded in 2006, this organization quickly became one of the most influential lobbying entities in America. By 2023, it had over 10 million active members and raised millions of dollars annually in support of Israel (CUFI, 2023). Through annual conferences in Washington D.C., direct meetings with legislators, extensive advertising campaigns, and influential media like religious television networks, CUFI has directly impacted policymaking in the U.S. Congress, particularly regarding military and diplomatic aid to Israel. A notable feature of Evangelical Christians in America is their ability to penetrate the country's political structure through a powerful voter base and nationwide organized mobilization. This influence peaked during Donald Trump's first presidential term (2017–2021). To secure the enduring support of his conservative religious base, especially Evangelicals, Trump pursued policies perfectly aligned with their demands, including moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, cutting funding to the UN for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), withdrawing from the JCPOA, and intensifying sanctions against Iran (Guth et al., 2020; Gold, 2019).

One of the most important characteristics of Evangelical Christians in America is their belief in eschatology and the expectation of Christ's return to earth, which is uniquely linked to the issue of Israel. According to this belief, the rebuilding of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem and the presence of Jews in the Promised Land are prerequisites for the fulfillment of Christ's return (Storm, 2013). This ideology leads to any criticism of Israel's policies, especially towards the Palestinians, being interpreted as opposition to God's will and even hostility towards the Christian faith (Spector, 2009). Thus, support for Israel as the "holy land" and the focal point of fulfilling divine promises serves as a justification for overlooking human rights violations and the killing of Palestinian people (Marsden, 2016). In fact, the sacralization of Israel by Evangelicals has transferred politics from the realm of reason to the realm of revelation. The central question now is: How can one justify the genocide of Palestinians and the suffering of civilians with faith in Christ?

How can we comprehend this historical paradox where the teachings of Jesus Christ—which emphasized love for enemies, compassion for the oppressed, and unconditional forgiveness—have now become a tool to

justify the slaughter and displacement of a defenseless people? From the perspective of Christian theology, Jesus is known as the 'Good Shepherd' who seeks the lost sheep and suffers for humanity's salvation. In the Sermon on the Mount, he says: 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth' (Matthew 5:5). How, then, can the same Christ be a source of inspiration for policies that lead to the displacement and death of the Palestinian 'meek'? If he dined with the poor and the oppressed, how can his followers sanctify the bombing of the homes of the poor in Gaza? The sanctity of Christ lies in his suffering to save humanity, not in killing humans to bring him back. History has shown that sacred ignorance is the last refuge of power for legitimizing the most illegitimate actions.

This fundamental contradiction has long been noted by Christian theologians. Reinhold Niebuhr warned that the greatest danger in religious politics is identifying God with partisan aims, because “no suffering in the spiritual life of man is deeper than the cruelty of righteous people” (Niebuhr, 1952, p. 41). Along the same lines, Stanley Hauerwas emphasizes that “the cross is not a justification for violence, but the end of sacrifice” (Hauerwas, 1981, p. 85); and Miroslav Volf warns: “If we harness God to national interests, we have reduced God to a political idol” (Volf, 1996, p. 274). These prophetic warnings all testify that those political readings of faith that lead to the sanctification of violence are in fundamental conflict with the liberating essence of Christ’s message.

It must be emphasized that this critique is not directed at the Christian faith itself, but at the political interpretations that use religious language to justify violence. The apocalyptic ideology of Evangelicals, by focusing on biblical predictions about Christ's return, has effectively reduced the theology of salvation to a political project. By sacralizing Israel, they have not only removed politics from the realm of rationality but have also distorted the core nature of Christ's message. The Christ who himself fell victim to political violence and commanded 'Put your sword back in its place' (Matthew 26:52) has now become a symbol for justifying systematic violence. This contradiction deepens when we return to the fundamental question: Can the return of Christ—which in Christian theology symbolizes the ultimate victory of love over evil—come at the price of destroying innocent humans and violating the inherent dignity of God's creations? How can one imagine that the savior of humanity made his own return conditional on the destruction of a part of that humanity? This reading of the scriptures not only contradicts the logic of divine justice but also presents a contradictory image of God's merciful nature in Christianity. In fact, this selective interpretation of sacred texts has enlisted 'Sacred Ignorance' to create an inseparable link between faith in Christ and support for a political-military project. But the fundamental ethical question remains: How can the killing of Palestinian children be justified by following the Christ who said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder

them' (Luke 18:16)? This issue clearly shows how, under the shadow of Sacred Ignorance, Christian faith can turn into its own opposite.

The apocalyptic ideology of Evangelicals plays a significant role not only in foreign policy but also within America. The use of religious doctrines to justify the suppression of political and scholarly opponents is one of its most notable manifestations. Within this framework, critics of Israeli policies or Palestinian rights activists are considered a threat to the divine plan and are even labeled with terms like "anti-religion" or "anti-Christ" (Hardy, 2018). This situation creates an atmosphere of terror and self-censorship in universities and academic centers, where opposing the dominant religious-political worldview comes at the cost of losing academic credibility, professional positions, and even personal safety (Green, 2020). For instance, many researchers and university professors who examine the realities of Palestine face organized and financial pressures aimed at silencing dissent (Kennedy, 2017). *In a liberal society, no crime is greater than killing inquiry.*

The dominant Evangelical narrative views Israel not merely as a country but as a sacred symbol of the fulfillment of God's promises. This leads to the justification of Israel's military and security policies, even in the face of war crimes, portraying them as "sacred" and necessary actions against enemies (Spector, 2009). Therefore, this ideology serves as a cover for the exercise of force and duplicity, as religious doctrines are used as tools to legitimize harsh and inhumane policies. This phenomenon not only fuels a crisis of free speech but also traps the academic and media community in a closed cycle of self-censorship and conformity to restrictive religious views (Fisher, 2018).

In this context, cases have been reported where some students and researchers have been barred from attending seminars and conferences or pressured to leave the university due to expressing dissenting views (Goldberg, 2018). These trends have intensified particularly in prestigious universities and research institutes that are more dependent on government policies and the financial support of Evangelicals. Restricting free speech in academic environments not only negatively affects researchers' morale but also directly impacts the quality and progress of science and innovation. Science, in its essence, requires free dialogue, critique, and doubt, and any ideological pressure that disrupts this process leads to scientific stagnation (Turner, 2020). Studies show that when researchers refrain from publishing results or criticizing policies for fear of social or political consequences, not only are research projects left unfinished, but innovative ideas are also suppressed (Wagner, 2019). This is particularly palpable in the social sciences and humanities, where political and religious issues have the most influence (Klein, 2021). A closed atmosphere in universities and academic centers reduces their attractiveness to international researchers and elites,

consequently diminishing scientific competitiveness and losing opportunities for global collaboration (Michaels, 2018).

It must be emphasized that the financial power of Evangelicals, fueled by apocalyptic ideology, has become a tool for influencing major U.S. policies. This investment has penetrated not only foreign policy but also education, media, universities, and even the judiciary. The use of wealth in the service of religious "duplicity" has paved the way for the suppression of critical thought in American academic and intellectual environments. Just as the Church and despotic governments used Christian thought to rally the masses and suppress freedom of speech and thought, Evangelical Christians and religious Zionist supporters in today's American society are repeating the same patterns and suppressing any critical thought regarding Israel.

Ultimately, the special relationship between the U.S. and Israel cannot be explained based on geopolitical rationality or U.S. national interests. This relationship is largely the product of powerful lobbies, the suppression of dissent through the "antisemitism" label, and ideological legitimation by apocalyptic Evangelical currents. Consequently, what is called the "special relationship" is, in fact, an example of the nexus between political power, control of public discourse, and religious ideology, which profoundly affects the future of U.S. foreign policy and Middle Eastern stability, and beyond that, has now influenced U.S. domestic policy, leading to the overt suppression of free speech and the academic community.

This convergence between apocalyptic faith in America and religious Zionism in Israel has created a dual discursive system that traps both sides in the logic of sacralization. In America, this sacralization manifests as unconditional support for Israel, and in Israel, as policies perceived as the fulfillment of divine promises. This closed cycle has weakened political rationality in both societies. This is why Israel itself is harmed by this issue and is dragged into the quagmire of ideological obsession.

Evidence indicates that schools of thought based on sacralization hold significant sway in the Israeli public sphere, viewing the formation of a Greater Israel as a revelation and never willing to accept anything less. If, in American society, a politician wishes to oppose Washington's quasi-revelatory policies towards Tel Aviv, they face the label of antisemitism and their political career ends. But the situation in Israel is far more tragic. The last prime minister in Israel who seriously sought reconciliation with the Palestinians and an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was Yitzhak Rabin, who was ultimately assassinated by a 25-year-old extremist. It is necessary to note that Rabin—with all the shortcomings and criticisms of the Oslo process—represented, in the discursive confrontation of his time, the current of pragmatic rationality against the current of sacralizing ideology. His assassination symbolizes not the endorsement of all his positions, but

the violent elimination of the rational discourse *itself* that sought reconciliation. Rabin essentially fell victim to the confrontation between understanding derived from science and Sacred Ignorance. He knew well that the biggest challenge to Israel's national security was the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict, not external threats. What is noteworthy in this assassination is Rabin's understanding of national security based on objective realities (unresolved conflict = the greatest threat) versus the belief of a segment of society in a "Greater Israel" as a revelatory matter. Since Israeli society is replete with individuals who view the establishment of a Greater Israel as a revelation, politicians in this country know that the price of any compromise with the Palestinians will be nothing less than what happened to Yitzhak Rabin. The rise of politicians like Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir in the Israeli political landscape clearly shows the extent to which revelatory and apocalyptic thinking is suppressing logic and rationality in this country. In such an atmosphere, any compromise is equated with sacred treason and will be met with serious threats.

We must not forget that Israel, within its internationally recognized borders, is a functioning democracy, and it is its public opinion that chooses its politicians. The continued power of right-wing parties like Likud under the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu—the record-holder for the longest tenure as prime minister—and, more importantly, the explicit entry of individuals like Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich into the government, who openly speak of "slaughter," "settlement expansion," and "ethnic cleansing" of Palestinians, clearly testifies that the evolution of the dominant discourse in Israel has distanced it from conventional rational paradigms. Therefore, a strategic mistake in Western analysis is reducing the problem to one individual—Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu is not a unique phenomenon; he is the manifestation and representative of an intellectual majority in today's Israel. Even with his departure from power, the existing discursive and political structures will replace him with individuals of the same ideological reading. The problem lies in the "Sacred Ignorance" that has cast a shadow over the Israeli public sphere, not in a specific figure.

A stark example of the dominance of apocalyptic thinking over rational calculations can be seen in Israel's approach to Israeli hostages in Gaza. Although freeing these hostages was possible through diplomatic channels and negotiation, the Israeli government systematically avoided this path and instead launched extensive military operations that themselves led to the deaths of a significant number of these same hostages. According to a report by the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East (2024), by January 2024, at least 31 Israeli hostages had been killed as a result of Israeli military operations in Gaza. This is while, as confirmed by Human

Rights Watch (2024), there were opportunities to negotiate their release at several stages.

This clear preference for a military strategy over diplomacy—at the cost of its own citizens' lives—indicates the prioritization of ideology over rational pragmatism. As Weyl (2024) notes in his analysis for the Center for Middle East Security and Strategic Studies, the right-wing coalition government in Israel was willing to sacrifice the lives of its own hostages for broader geopolitical goals and ideological ideals. This action is a manifestation of the same 'Sacred Ignorance' in which sublime goals and sanctified beliefs overshadow any ethical or rational calculation.

This clear preference for a military strategy is a tragic paradox in which a state with the slogan "Never Again" regarding Jews has itself become an agent endangering the lives of its own Jewish citizens. This duality shows the depth of the influence of 'Sacred Ignorance' on the highest levels of decision-making; to the extent that even the fundamental values of Zionism have faded in the face of extreme identity-based ideals. In fact, a country that sees itself as the savior of Jews and its slogan is preventing their genocide again, now, with its apocalyptic thoughts and the goal of a Greater Israel, turns a blind eye even to the lives of its own captive Jewish citizens.

This clear preference for a military strategy over diplomacy, exemplified by the disregard for the lives of Israeli hostages, has even more horrifying dimensions. Independent reports and field evidence—including investigations by Israeli journalists at "+972 Magazine"—point to the implementation of the "Hannibal Directive" on October 7th; a doctrine traditionally stated to aim at preventing the capture of Israeli soldiers at any cost—even at the cost of their own lives. This evidence suggests that during the attacks that day, Israeli army units, implementing this doctrine, fired not only at the attackers but also at civilians and the Israeli hostages themselves, killing an unknown number of their own citizens in this "indiscriminate fire." This event turns the tragedy of "Never Again" into an ideological collective suicide: a state that had sworn that no Jew would ever again be a victim is now so trapped in 'Sacred Ignorance' that, to preserve the myth of its absolute power and invincibility, it is willing not to save its citizens, but to sacrifice them. This is the most inverted manifestation of the Zionist ideal: a savior turned killer.

On the other hand, the policy of America's blank check towards Israel has itself acted as a key driver in exacerbating extremism within that country. This unconditional support has signaled to Israeli politicians that they can systematically outsource the costs of their aggressive policies. Consequently, this relationship has created a vicious cycle: American support strengthens extremist right-wing currents in Israel, and these strengthened currents pursue policies that themselves require even more

unconditional support from Washington. The peak of this phenomenon can be seen in the unprecedented move by the Trump administration to seek the dismissal of the corruption case against Netanyahu—a clear example showing that U.S. support for a particular faction has even transcended the boundaries of the rule of law.

Furthermore, another horrifying phenomenon illustrates the absolute impunity of Israeli soldiers: the voluntary and self-incriminating sharing of images of their crimes on social media. Soldiers who proudly display the destruction of homes, mock displaced civilians, and vandalize Palestinian personal property fear neither punishment nor scandal. This behavior, which would be prosecutable under any international legal system, has become normalized and even a source of pride under the shadow of America's political and military "blank check." This event is the concrete manifestation of a dire equation: absolute impunity not only brings a lack of accountability but encourages crime and even turns it into a spectacle for self-promotion. This is the pinnacle of corruption born from 'Sacred Ignorance'—where evil is no longer hidden but celebrated in public.

In the end, the apocalyptic ideology, whether in the form of Evangelical Christianity or religious Zionism, has transferred politics from the logic of rationality to the logic of sanctity. In such a space, strategic decisions are made not based on national interest but on the illusion of fulfilling divine promises. This is the point where 'Sacred Ignorance,' as a new form of spiritual totalitarianism, corrodes from within not only modern rationality but the very liberal-democratic principles that the West claims to defend.

The explanatory power of the concept of "Sacred Ignorance" lies in its identification of a global pattern in governance: the sacrifice of rationality at the altar of an ideological taboo. This phenomenon is not confined to a specific ideology or geography. While this article focuses on its manifestation within American political discourse concerning Israel, analogous forms can be identified in systems with entirely different foundations of legitimacy.

For instance, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, a specific, state-mandated reading of Islam and the establishment of the theory of *Velayat-e Faqih* (Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist)—which posits the governing institution as an embodiment of the sacred—systematically label and suppress any political criticism not as legitimate dissent, but as "hypocrisy" (*nifaq*) or "weakening Islam."

This comparison is not intended to draw a direct parallel between the two states, but rather to emphasize a unified functional pattern: in both cases, a dominant ideology, by creating an uncriticizable "sacred domain," disables the rational mechanisms of feedback, accountability, and error-correction

within the political system. This disabling of critical discourse is the very essence of "Sacred Ignorance."

6. Field Manifestations: The Systematic Suppression of Freedom of Speech in Contemporary America

Having analyzed the historical roots of "Sacred Ignorance," we can now examine its most symbolic realm of manifestation in contemporary American society: the suppression of critical discourse surrounding Israel. Sacralization, whether in the guise of religion, ideology, or nationalism, has always been the most effective tool for silencing thought.

In contemporary America, criticism of Israeli policies has become a symbolic arena for this confrontation. On one side lies the "critical discourse" of academics and researchers who evaluate these policies using scientific tools—legal analysis, historical examination, field evidence. On the other side, a powerful "dogmatic discourse" exists that, through a combination of labeling ("anti-Semite") and ideological sacralization ("Holy Israel" in apocalyptic theology), drags this criticism into the realm of the unspeakable and suppresses it. In this battle, the main confrontation is not between "science" and "faith," but between critical reason and self-legitimizing dogmatism. The victory of the latter means the gradual death of rationality at the heart of scientific institutions and, ultimately, the weakening of the foundations of democracy.

This discursive battle does not occur in a vacuum; it takes shape in a field dominated by a powerful network of lobbies—particularly the Israel Lobby. Lobbying, as an organized effort to influence legislation and policymaking (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998), has become a decisive institution in America (Drutman, 2015). In this ecosystem, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is recognized as one of the most powerful and effective lobbies (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007). This entity, leveraging immense financial resources, has cemented its influence in Congress and the White House, redefining U.S. foreign policy around the axis of guaranteeing Israel's interests (Smith, 2010).

Now, this power has extended not only into the corridors of political power but directly into knowledge-producing institutions. A charismatic coalition comprising the Israel Lobby and its Evangelical supporters uses wealth as a tool to exert systematic pressure on universities and media to suppress any research or viewpoint opposing their interests (McAdam & Tarrow, 2020). The mechanism of this control is multifaceted: from conditionally funding research and making large donations to universities, to applying direct economic pressure on publishers and academic media (Berman, 2017). In this model, wealth is employed not to expand knowledge, but to define the boundaries of knowledge's legitimacy.

Freedom of speech is recognized as one of the most fundamental democratic rights in America; however, in recent decades, the extensive influence of powerful lobbies, especially the Israel Lobby and Evangelicals, coupled with massive financial resources, has created restrictions and suppressions that challenge this basic right (Fraser, 2020). These restrictions have been more pronounced in universities and media, turning the issue of self-censorship or direct censorship into a serious crisis (Feldman & Friedman, 2018).

The Genocide of Freedom is a systematic and structured process in which power institutions, using the mechanisms of "Sacred Ignorance"—including ideological sacralization, labeling, and the creation of taboos—target critical discourse and, by gradually eliminating the possibility of rational dialogue, destroy democratic foundations and human dignity. Unlike physical genocide, this phenomenon is achieved not by destroying bodies, but by the "slaughter of thought" and the "silencing of different voices."

Key characteristics of the Genocide of Freedom include:

- Replacing rationality with non-criticizable ideologies.
- The systematic use of ideological labels (e.g., "anti-Semite") to silence critics.
- Creating self-censorship within the academic and intellectual community.
- Destroying the space for democratic dialogue under the cover of defending the "sacred matter."
- Turning critical subjects into "taboos" through sacralization.

The "Genocide of Freedom" can be defined as a process in which a power structure targets any critical thought around one or several specific subjects for systematic elimination. Just as in physical genocide, humans are destroyed regardless of their individual characteristics, here too, critical voices—regardless of the strength of their arguments or intellectual standing—are suppressed. The intensity of this phenomenon exists on a spectrum: at one end, a complete genocide of freedom occurs in totalitarian regimes that prohibit any dissent (examples: Soviet Union, North Korea). At the other end, a subject-specific or taboo-centric genocide is observed in societies with relative freedoms, where criticism is possible in many arenas, but entering specific "ideological forbidden zones" carries heavy consequences.

The mechanism of the "Genocide of Freedom" in the context of a liberal democracy like America takes on a more complex and selective form. Unlike

totalitarian regimes that completely close the public sphere, here a selective intellectual tyranny prevails, where criticism of most topics is permitted, except for one strategic taboo zone: any discussion concerning the special U.S.-Israel relationship and this country's policies. Within this framework, even the most obvious and well-documented criticisms—from human rights violations and the killing of civilians to blatant breaches of international law—if related to Israel, are immediately placed in the circle of the "unspeakable" and face systematic professional suppression. This process is precisely the "slaughter of thought" mentioned in the definition of the Genocide of Freedom: the selective elimination of an entire domain of critical rationality from legitimate discourse.

This terrifying atmosphere, created directly with the aim of curbing criticism of Israeli policies, has effectively led to the systematic violation of free speech and the suppression of free thought in academic environments. The importance of this issue stems from the fact that democracy and scientific progress can only grow in a free space devoid of economic and political pressures (Cohen, 2020). Universities, as primary centers of free research and critique, have faced extensive pressure from lobbies and power institutions in recent years. Specifically, issues that offer criticism of Israeli policies have often been met with harsh reactions and pressure for their removal or limitation (Chomsky & Barsamian, 2017).

For example, speaking events by students and professors holding critical views of Israeli policies have been canceled or faced financial threats at universities due to pressure groups and Israeli lobbies (Feldman & Friedman, 2018). These pressures often lead to self-censorship among professors and students to avoid financial or social problems (Kaplan, 2019).

One such case is that of Steven Salaita, a professor at the University of Illinois, who was denied employment solely due to tweets in support of Palestinians. The university was eventually forced to settle and pay him compensation (Kennedy, 2017). Furthermore, various American universities, under pressure from Evangelical supporters and Israel-related lobbies, have refrained from inviting speakers critical of this country's policies (Ernst, 2019).

Power lobbies, by controlling the flow of wealth in academic and media environments, exert double pressure to prevent criticism of Israel and the special U.S. relationship with this country. This money acts as a driving tool for controlling political and social discourse. In many cases, professors and journalists, fearing the loss of funding or financial support, have been forced into self-censorship (Fraser, 2020). This self-censorship not only limits freedom of speech but also fuels a crisis of public trust in academic and news institutions (Kaplan, 2019). In such an atmosphere, the climate of

free and scientific debate is disrupted, and "political loyalty" is considered the criterion for academic participation instead of the exchange of ideas. As Pierre Bourdieu explains, the academic field is not a free space, but a battlefield between forces of power and symbolic capital. When financial capital replaces symbolic capital (science and academic credibility), the autonomy of the scientific field vanishes (Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, 1984).

The extensive influence of lobbies, especially the Israel Lobby and Evangelicals, coupled with the use of vast financial resources, has had profound effects on restricting and suppressing freedom of speech in American universities and media. This phenomenon has led to reduced critical engagement in the academic and political sphere, increased self-censorship, and ultimately threatens the health of democracy and the space for dialogue in America. As Reinhold Niebuhr warns, a society in which moral truth is sacrificed for political power and economic interests will sooner or later face a crisis of legitimacy from within (*Moral Man and Immoral Society*, 1932).

The American academic community, as one of the world's leading research institutions, is increasingly under financial and political pressure stemming from the influence of lobbies and wealthy sources. This influence, in the form of financial restrictions and sanctions, steering research topics, and pressure on researchers and university professors, has created serious limitations on academic and research freedom (Bourdieu, 2018; Mirowski, 2019). Evidence shows that researchers and university professors in America face widespread pressures exerted by political, economic, and religious lobbies. These pressures can manifest as threats to cut funding, restricting access to research facilities and opportunities, or even personal and professional threats (Feldman & Friedman, 2018). Researchers who address sensitive topics related to U.S. foreign policy, including criticism of U.S.-Israel relations or examining issues concerning Evangelicals, face greater risks. Many are forced into self-censorship to avoid financial and professional harm (Kaplan, 2019).

Furthermore, research topics that could challenge the interests of powerful lobbies are typically known as "forbidden topics." These include criticizing Israeli policies, human rights issues, or research that explains the influence of Evangelicals in American politics (Chomsky & Barsamian, 2017). Scientific projects addressing these topics often face financial sanctions; large research grants are canceled or reduced, limiting researchers' ability to continue their work (Mirowski, 2019). This situation has led researchers to pursue "safer" topics to secure necessary funding and remain in the academic cycle (Bourdieu, 2018). All these cases clearly show that critical professors today are burned not at the stake, but by the denial of funding.

Funding providers, including governments, corporations, and non-profit organizations heavily influenced by political lobbies, play a significant role in steering scientific research (Drutman, 2015). These entities, through financial pressures and specific policies, guide researchers towards topics favorable to them and prevent independent scientific inquiries that might threaten their political or economic interests (Mirowski, 2019). This trend leads to a limitation in the diversity of research topics and a reduction in scientific independence (Fraser, 2020).

The influence of lobbies and large financial resources in the American academic community has now created serious limitations on research freedom and scientific independence. Financial pressures and sanctions, researcher self-censorship, and the steering of research by funding institutions pose a serious threat to the quality and comprehensiveness of scientific knowledge. In universities, this pressure manifests as control over research budgets, the dismissal or punishment of critical professors, and the restriction of anti-Zionist student activities. American universities, which should be places for the free exchange of ideas, have in some cases become garrisons for defending a specific discourse; a discourse in which Israel is always considered "innocent" and Palestinians are always deemed a "threat" (New Republic, 2023).

Media outlets are also widely affected by financial influence and pressure from lobbies. Massive investments by lobbies in media or advertising have led to critical reports on sensitive topics, including Israeli policies, being severely limited or censored in a particular way (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). A clear example of this is the removal or downplaying of reports addressing human rights violations by the Israeli government or criticizing Evangelical policies in America (Alterman, 2013). Consequently, media outlets tend to avoid controversial topics, leading to widespread self-censorship (Entman, 2008).

Mainstream American media, especially major television networks like CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC, are not exceptions to this environment. Many journalists are directly or indirectly pressured to refrain from explicit criticism of Israel. This media censorship often stems from a combination of political pressures, financial influence, and fear of reactions from organizations like the Anti-Defamation League or AIPAC (Friel & Falk, 2007). Thus, the media, tasked with public enlightenment, has become a tool in the hands of power lobbies to prevent free thought and solidify the ruling intellectual tyranny. This issue itself intensifies the pressure on free thought in the academic environment because critics of the status quo have no mainstream platform to express their views, while individuals supported by power lobbies continuously dominate mass media with the aim of steering public thought. Prominent thinkers like John Mearsheimer and others have never found a platform in mainstream media, whereas

supporters of power lobbies consistently appear on these outlets, promoting the ruling intellectual tyranny.

As observed, the "Genocide of Freedom" in America is not a literary exaggeration, but a documented, multi-faceted process in which a power-ideology coalition, using financial, political, and legal levers, has destroyed the independence of academic and media institutions, turning them into tools for reproducing the dominant discourse. We now turn to the peak of this process in the post-October era.

6-1. The Overt Suppression of Freedom of Speech Post-October 7th

The suppression of free speech and the prevention of free criticism of U.S. policy towards Israel has a history of over half a century, with prominent intellectuals like John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, two preeminent International Relations scholars, facing the most severe attacks and even being accused of antisemitism for writing their book *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*. However, post-October 7, 2023, the American academic and university community witnessed the most unprecedented period of the Genocide of Freedom, to the extent that the U.S. government and Congress openly attacked academic environments and suppressed criticism of the genocide of Palestinians.

The suppression of the American academic community after October 2023 was so severe that it is in no way comparable to previous years. Although continuous structural pressures had suppressed debates related to specific topics such as criticism of Israel, post-October 2023, governmental institutions intervened overtly and directly, engaging in the violent suppression of peaceful student protests and freedom of speech**.** Notably, American universities, which once had an independent nature, not only failed to protest the interference of security forces and the suppression of students but, in many cases, supported these suppressions due to government pressure (threats of cutting funding and financial aid). As Pierre Bourdieu explains in his theory of "symbolic power," academic institutions lose their autonomy when the symbolic capital of science becomes subordinate to political and financial capital. In this situation, truth is defined not in the field of rationality, but in the field of power (Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, 1984).

Since October 2023, American universities have experienced one of the most intense and systematic periods of free speech suppression in their contemporary history. In this process, a tripartite coalition comprising Congress, the administration (from Biden to Trump), and powerful pro-Israel lobbies has used political, financial, and legal tools to place universities under unprecedented pressure to silence any criticism of Israeli policies. The manifestation of this pressure can be clearly seen in cases

such as the firing of professors, the dissolution of student groups, threats to cut funding, and the censorship of scientific research. All these actions have been taken in clear contradiction to the pillars of American democracy—free speech and academic independence—and by instrumentalizing baseless accusations of "antisemitism" and reinforcing the discourse of "Sacred Ignorance," have established an atmosphere of terror and self-censorship in the academic environment.

- **Governmental and Legislative Pressure:**

  - In December 2023, the U.S. Department of Education, in cooperation with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), promoted a broad definition of antisemitism that included criticism of Israel (U.S. Department of Education, 2023). Based on this guideline, universities receiving federal aid were obligated to suppress any activity deemed "antisemitic." This ambiguous definition quickly became a tool for silencing critics of Israel.

  - In April 2024, Senator Ted Cruz, a Republican, introduced a bill that would cut funding to universities "resistant to combating antisemitism" (The Hill, 2024).

  - In May 2024, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the "Antisemitism Awareness Act," which incorporates the IHRA definition of antisemitism into civil rights law. This definition includes some criticisms of Israel and could be used as a tool to suppress free speech on campuses (Inside Higher Ed, 2024).

  - In December 2023 and again in February 2024, the Congressional Education Committee held hearings, summoning the presidents of Harvard, MIT, and the University of Pennsylvania to account for their "silence on antisemitism" (CNN, 2024). These hearings led to the resignation of Claudine Gay, President of Harvard University (The Washington Post, 2024).

- **The Role of Pro-Israel Lobbies:**

  - **AIPAC:** As one of the most powerful political lobbies in America, spending millions annually to influence policymakers, AIPAC, after the Gaza war, engaged in:

    - *Attacking Student Groups:* In November 2023, AIPAC sent a letter to 50 universities demanding the dissolution of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) groups (The Intercept, 2023).

- *Cutting Financial Aid:* Columbia University, under pressure from AIPAC, lost donations from several Zionist donors (The Guardian, 2024).

- **Other Lobbies (ADL and Canary Mission):**

- The **Anti-Defamation League (ADL)**: This organization published a list of "antisemitic" professors and students, leading to online threats and the dismissal of some of them (The Forward, 2024).

- The **Canary Mission** project: This group created a website that labeled pro-Palestine activists as "terrorists" and published their personal information (Middle East Eye, 2024).

- **Suppression on Campus: Dissolution of Groups and Protests:**

- **Brandeis University:** Dissolved its SJP chapter in October 2023 (NBC News, 2023).

- **University of Florida:** Suppressed a student protest with police intervention (Al Jazeera, 2024).

- **Targeting Academics and Research:**

- **University of California (UCLA):** A study on the impact of the Gaza war on the mental health of Palestinians was halted (Los Angeles Times, 2024).

- **Dr. Jihad Aboualheja (Georgetown University):** Was investigated for criticizing Israel in the classroom (Georgetown Voice, 2024).

- **Professor Marc Lamont Hill (Temple University):** Was removed from his student advisory position after a pro-Palestine speech (Philly Inquirer, 2024).

  The destructive consequences of these actions, beyond suppressing free speech and imposing the ruling intellectual tyranny, have been the creation of a wave of self-censorship in the academic environment. A FIRE survey showed that 70% of professors remain silent about Israel out of fear (FIRE, 2024). This indicates that the system operates in such a way that widespread direct censorship is unnecessary, and the victims have themselves become the guardians of their own intellectual prison. *Intellectual tyranny is the most advanced form of tyranny; because it compels its victim to participate in their own destruction.*

- This mechanism of suppression has had a broader discursive consequence: a sharp increase in Islam phobia**.** Since the dominant discourse equates "Israel" with "Judaism," it has, in practice, equated "Palestine" with "Islam"

and attributes any defense of Palestinian rights to "support for extremism." Within this framework, Islam phobia has become an effective strategy for completely marginalizing and demonizing the pro-Palestine movement. The objective consequence of this strategy can be seen in alarming statistics; for instance, CAIR reports a 400% increase in attacks on Muslim students during the recent protests (CAIR, 2024).

It must be understood that these actions will do nothing but undermine the academic credibility of the United States. Suppressing free speech, preventing independent research, and creating terror within the academic community by imposing the ruling intellectual tyranny will cause the institution of science, which thrives under the shadow of independent research and constructive criticism, to lose its ability to produce knowledge, becoming a puppet in the hands of the powerful and losing its independence. The American Political Science Association (APSA) warned that these pressures threaten "independent research" (APSA, 2023).

The suppression of free speech in American universities after the Gaza war indicates a deep crisis in American democracy. The Israel Lobby and the Biden administration, followed by the Trump administration, using financial, political, and legal tools, have not turned the academic sphere into a safe place for free dialogue, but have transformed it into an arena for exercising power.

- **Escalation in 2025:**

  - In January 2025, Donald Trump signed Executive Order 14188, titled "Additional Actions to Combat Antisemitism." This order directed the Department of Education and the Department of Homeland Security to scrutinize the activities of international students, particularly regarding protests related to Israel (Executive Order 14188, 2025). Following this order, the Department of Education launched extensive investigations into over 60 universities, including Harvard and Columbia. These investigations, under the pretext of combating antisemitism, effectively led to the suppression of student protests and the restriction of free speech (U.S. Department of Education, 2025).

- **Case Studies: Harvard and Columbia:**

  - **Harvard University:** The Trump administration imposed unprecedented pressure from the start of its term. In May 2025, the university's student and exchange visitor program (SEVP) certification was revoked, jeopardizing the visa status of approximately 6,800 international students. The government also demanded that Harvard hand over audio-visual

records related to protests and disciplinary files of non-immigrant students (The Atlantic, 2025). Additionally, the Trump administration blocked over $2.2 billion in federal funding to Harvard unless the university dissolved its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) offices and implemented specific policies (Reuters, 2025).

- **Student Persecution:** During the protests of April 2025, a number of Harvard students were arrested for holding sit-ins on campus. Examples include:

  - **Fatima Mousa**, a political science master's student, was arrested on charges of "disturbing public order" and threatened with deportation after participating in a peaceful sit-in protesting Israeli policies.

  - **Ali Rizwan**, a Pakistani PhD student, was arrested by ICE on the pretext of "violating student visa terms" and transferred to a detention center (The Atlantic, 2025(

- **Columbia University:** Student protests against Israeli policies were met with a severe government response. In March 2025**,** Mahmoud Khalil, a Palestinian student and human rights activist, was arrested by ICE. This arrest occurred without a judicial warrant and with threats to revoke his permanent residency, sparking widespread reactions within the academic community. In March and April 2025, over 150 students were arrested during a peaceful sit-in on Columbia's main lawn (CNN, 2025). Furthermore, Columbia University faced federal pressure and lost over $400 million in federal funding (Reuters, 2025).

- **Chilling Effect on International Academic Exchange:**

- While many global intellectuals previously chose American universities for graduate studies, strengthening the scientific community, the U.S. government is now openly suppressing the diversification of its academic community and explicitly seeking to prevent students critical of Israel from entering the country. In May 2025, the U.S. Department of State announced that the social media accounts of applicants for student visas, especially those intending to study at universities like Harvard, would be scrutinized. The stated goal of these reviews was to identify views critical of Israel and antisemitism. This policy is part of the administration's efforts to restrict the entry of foreign students with views critical of Israel (AP News, 2025).

  The events following October 2023 and the widespread suppression of academics and free speech in the United States indicate that Sacred Ignorance has been systematically carrying out a Genocide of Freedom, a process that will have very grave consequences.

- Engaging with Rival Hypotheses:

Proponents of these restrictions might argue that the repressive actions after October 7th were a necessary response to combat antisemitism and ensure the security of Jewish students. However, this justification faces several fundamental flaws: First, this argument deliberately conflates "legitimate criticism of a state" with "racist antisemitism"—the very discursive sleight of hand that this article identifies as the central mechanism of "Sacred Ignorance." The broad, politicized definition that considers any criticism of Israeli policies as antisemitism not only contradicts field data on the diversity of views within the American Jewish community itself but, by devaluing the real concept of antisemitism, deals the greatest blow to the fight against this heinous phenomenon in the long run. Second, real security in a democratic society is achieved not through enforced silence, but through dialogue free from fear. The systematic suppression of critical voices, by creating an atmosphere of terror and oppression, only deepens divisions and ultimately increases insecurity for all, including Jewish citizens.

Conversely, some might view this unconditional support and suppression of critics not as stemming from Sacred Ignorance, but as resulting from a rational strategic calculation to maintain a key ally in the Middle East. But this claim collapses when confronted with the logic of political realism itself. If this relationship were truly based on strategic rationality, we should have witnessed flexibility and the application of leverage by Washington to curb the risky actions of its ally, whereas the history of this relationship shows a permanent "blank check." Furthermore, from a hard-nosed national interest perspective, the costs of this alliance—including the strengthening of extremist currents, damage to international standing, and the financial burden on American taxpayers—clearly outweigh its uncertain benefits. Therefore, the continuity of this policy can only be explained if it is analyzed not as a strategic choice, but as an "ideological imperative" within the framework of Sacred Ignorance; a compulsion that sacrifices rationality at the altar of the sanctity of a political alliance. Consequently, what happened in America after October 7th is not merely a crisis of free speech, but a sign of a civilizational transition from critical rationality to enforced sanctity; a stage where "knowledge" itself has become a tool for justifying ignorance.

7. Analyzing an Escalation: The Intensification of 'Sacred Ignorance' in the Post-October Era

Although the foundations of "Sacred Ignorance" surrounding the U.S.-Israel special relationship have been in place for decades, the unprecedented intensity of the suppression of critical discourse in recent years, particularly following the events of October 7, 2023, requires a multi-level analysis

within this same combined theoretical framework. In other words, the question is: Why are the mechanisms of labeling and sacralization now being deployed with such symbolic and concrete violence? The answer must be sought in the simultaneous reinforcement of five key factors:

First, Failure in the Narrative War: The unprecedented peak of "Sacred Ignorance" in the post-October era must be seen as a fearful and violent response to the failure of a historic "narrative war." The expansion of information highways and decentralized social media has shattered the traditional monopoly of mainstream media over the narrative of the conflict. Now, ordinary citizens around the world—via mobile phones in the hands of Palestinian civilians—are live and direct witnesses to the real consequences of policies: images of children trapped under rubble, doctors performing surgeries without equipment, and ruins that find no place in official reports. This "democratization of truth" has shaken the ethical foundations of the dominant discourse. Faced with this flood of visual evidence that breaks the taboo of "democratic Israel," the power-ideology coalition realized it could no longer manage public opinion with the old tools of hidden censorship and soft labeling. Hence, it has been forced to intensify the mechanisms of "Sacred Ignorance" and lay them bare: *if you cannot control the narrative, you must silence the critics' voices with greater violence and more overt suppression.* This desperate struggle is not a sign of strength, but the cry of bankruptcy of an ideological project that cannot contain truth within its autocratic framework.

The traditional narrative hegemony of Israel's supporters now faces a crisis. The ideological apparatus of "Sacred Ignorance," to confront this crisis of legitimacy, has resorted not only to greater violence but also to symbolic violence (systematic censorship and labeling) and rendering the discursive space more irrational to avoid confronting rival arguments on a level playing field. As Pierre Bourdieu notes, "symbolic violence" is that form of power which, without physical coercion, reproduces obedience through language and meaning; and as Gramsci said, hegemony is formed not through force, but through control of the narrative. Within this framework, "Sacred Ignorance" can be seen as the final tool of the power-ideology coalition to reproduce its waning hegemony.

Second, Shifts in Security-Geopolitical Equations and Increasing Interdependence: Within the framework of an international order transitioning to multipolarity, the strategic calculations of Washington and Tel Aviv have undergone fundamental changes. On one hand, the United States, with the rise of China as a strategic rival, is compelled to "pivot to East Asia" and concentrate its resources in the Indo-Pacific domain. This pivot implies a relative reduction in its capacity and perhaps willingness to engage in costly conflicts in the Middle East.

On the other hand, Israel, perceiving this shift in priorities, feels it is losing Washington's former "monopoly of attention" and "unlimited commitment." This has acutely intensified Zionism's perennial "sense of historical vulnerability." The paradoxical point is that although Israel has always prided itself on its independent military power and deterrence, it is now, as a result of extremist right-wing and aggressive policies, more dependent than ever on America's unconditional military backing—from guided bombs to diplomatic cover in the Security Council. This increasing dependency means that Washington's "pivot to Asia" and any change in its strategic priorities could directly pose an existential threat to Tel Aviv's ability to continue its current aggressive policies. Severe dependence on an external patron can disrupt a country's "strategic calculus" and push it toward irrational risk-taking. This makes Israel acutely vulnerable to a potential crisis in relations with the United States (e.g., a change of president or a shift in strategic priorities).

Under these conditions, to guarantee the continuity of America's unconditional support, Israel needs to prove its "strategic value" as an irreplaceable and reliable base in the region. Any criticism of Israel's actions—which could tarnish its image as a "stable and reliable ally"—is considered not merely a difference of opinion, but a danger to this "strategic bargain." Therefore, the violent suppression of every critical voice is, for Israel, a tool to demonstrate "power and resolve" to its American patron, and for its supporting lobbies in Washington, a necessary action to remove political obstacles on the path of continuing this strategic alliance. In this framework, "Sacred Ignorance" becomes a realist necessity for preserving a vital alliance on the verge of weakening.

Third, Change in Israel's Domestic Sphere: The unprecedented rise to power and formation of a coalition government comprising the extreme right and Zionist religious parties in Israel, whose ideological core is based on the ideals of "Greater Israel" and "identity-based sacralization," has naturally made the political space more conducive to discourses based on "Sacred Ignorance" and provided the necessary social and discursive groundwork for its reproduction. This government challenges not only external critics but also internal critics and even its own judicial institutions with the same sanctimonious rhetoric.

Fourth, Loss of Legitimacy in the Arena of International Institutions: Concurrent with the failure in the arena of public opinion, the legitimizing foundations of formal international mechanisms have also been shaken. For the first time in the history of this conflict, key international institutions—from the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which accused Israel of "plausible acts of genocide," to the International Criminal Court (ICC), which sought arrest warrants for its leaders—have appeared not in the role of supporters, but as judges and critics. This radical shift has

invalidated Israel's long-standing "trump card"—portraying itself as the "victim" and "savior" within the international system. When the rules of the legal game—which have always been under Western influence—become the enemy, the only remaining path is to "outlaw the law itself." Hence, "Sacred Ignorance," by attacking the international institutions themselves (accusing the Hague court of "antisemitism," threatening to sanction the ICC), seeks to create an "organized norm-shattering": *if you cannot win within the framework of the law, change the entire game to one of "ideological loyalty."* This signifies a transition from an order based on law—however unjust—to an ideological chaos.

Fifth, Ontological Irrelevance: Alongside these more objective calculations, a psychological dimension can be noted: the "Fear of Ontological Irrelevance." For a coalition that ties its identity to a historic and sanctified mission, the decline of power is not only a geopolitical failure but a profound crisis of meaning. Therefore, more violent suppression becomes the only remaining way to prove existence and believe in one's own importance in a world that is rapidly moving past their narratives. This turns aggression into the only remaining form of "action" and suppression into the only possible form of "defense."

These five factors can be seen as an interconnected causal chain: "Failure in the narrative war" (the immediate, legitimacy-eroding factor) and "Increased strategic dependency in a multipolar order" (the structural pressure factor) have joined hands to intensify the "Crisis of legitimacy in international institutions." These three factors, against the backdrop of the "Change in Israel's domestic sphere," reinforce each other and ultimately lead to "Ontological Irrelevance" and a violent reaction. The current intensification of suppression can be understood as the reaction of a power-ideology coalition feeling "under siege" on both fronts—both internationally and domestically. When rational arguments decline in the public sphere, the only refuge for maintaining hegemony is to resort to "delusional sacralization" and all-out suppression.

Together, these five factors create a vicious cycle: the more the dominant discourse fails, the more intense its symbolic violence becomes; and the more intense this violence becomes, the more its legitimacy crumbles. This is a pattern observable in the final years of the South African apartheid regime or in the medieval Church's confrontation with reformist movements. "Sacred Ignorance" at this stage is not a strategic choice, but a sign of ideological bankruptcy.

8. Sacred Ignorance: The Missing Link in the Realist Explanation

This study, while acknowledging the fundamental importance of the anarchic structure of the international system in shaping state behavior—as posited by the core of Mearsheimer and Walt's structural realism—highlights a major empirical and theoretical paradox: How can a country like the United States, a superpower within an anarchic system, systematically and over the long term pursue policies that not only contradict its strategic national interests but also jeopardize its long-term survival and security?

John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, two prominent neorealist thinkers, themselves acknowledged this paradox in their seminal work, The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy. With extensive evidence, they demonstrate that a domestic actor (the Israel Lobby) has been able to steer Washington's policy in the Middle East in a direction that conflicts with America's own declared strategic interests and values. However, their analysis ultimately falls short of explaining the precise causal mechanism of this profound dysfunction. They describe the "what" effectively but do not fully elucidate the "how."

This article argues that the missing link in this explanation is a phenomenon termed "Sacred Ignorance." Sacred Ignorance is an ideological power system that targets and disrupts the "instrumental rationality" of the state—the very engine of realist theory. This phenomenon removes policy from the realm of cost-benefit calculation and transforms it into an unquestionable "taboo."

The operational mechanism of Sacred Ignorance and the lobby's power does not operate solely through money and pressure, but by seizing the state's very apparatus of perception and analysis. It achieves this through two primary tools:

1. Sacralization: An idea, relationship, or political entity (such as the special relationship with Israel) is endowed with such a halo of sanctity that it becomes immune to critique.

2. Systematic Labeling: Any challenge or questioning is labeled as treason, blasphemy, or anti-Semitism, which strangles any rational dialogue in its cradle.

Under such conditions, although the anarchic international structure exerts pressure for rational behavior, a state whose perceptual and analytical apparatus is paralyzed by Sacred Ignorance is unable to receive and process these signals. A "systemic error" occurs: the state, instead of responding to the real stimuli of the international environment, reacts to illusions fed to it by the dominant domestic ideology. In practice, prominent strategists who should be defining national interests within the U.S. foreign policy apparatus, if they do not align with the sacralized ideologies, face the

label of "antisemite" and are purged from the system. Here, Sacred Ignorance, by suppressing academic elites, homogenizes the political elite to distort decision-making away from a rational path.

However, a shrewd realist must specify that the power of Sacred Ignorance is not absolute. This phenomenon operates within the "low-cost domains" of geopolitics. In other words, Sacred Ignorance can prevail over rationality only as long as the cost of a policy does not cross the threshold of "existential threat." This "threshold of tolerance" can be measured by an objective "Structural Pressure Index" comprising military-strategic indicators (such as the risk of direct conflict with a peer competitor or entanglement in a costly proxy war), economic indicators (such as strategic opportunity cost), and geopolitical indicators (such as the loss of key allies).

Evidence for this claim is Washington's relative caution regarding direct confrontation with Iran, as such a scenario clearly exceeds the cost tolerance threshold for a superpower, at which point realist logic would undoubtedly prevail. In contrast, unconditional support for Israel's operations in Gaza, while costly, is defined within the circle of "tolerable costs." In a world where China has emerged as America's peer competitor in East Asia, strategic errors and entering another Vietnam in the Middle East is utter folly, and structural pressure prevents this from materializing. For a superpower, a policy being "costly" is different from it being "existentially threatening." Supporting Israel is expensive for America (financially, reputationally, security-wise), but from the perspective of its political elites, it is not costly enough to threaten its very existence. This is the strategic malady that compels America to fight the "wrong wars."

The process of maintaining Sacred Ignorance is not confined to the realm of foreign policy. To immunize this taboo from questioning, its supporting ideological apparatus must attack the heart of rationality-producing institutions in society—namely, universities and the media. Therefore, what we witness as the "Genocide of Freedom" in the American academic sphere is not a side tragedy, but a functional necessity for the continuation of the irrational foreign policy based on Sacred Ignorance. The bitterest manifestation of this is the fate of the American academic community following the events of October 2023. For a system captive to "Sacred Ignorance," destroying the country's scientific reputation, silencing its foremost centers of rationality, and blatantly violating the liberal values it professes is a price easily paid—as a "tolerable cost"—to preserve an ideological taboo. This ultimate tragedy is completed when the cost of silence and complicity by academics themselves—to preserve their careers and social status—is deemed "tolerable" in their own eyes. Thus, the vicious cycle of "Sacred Ignorance" continues to reproduce itself by simultaneously sacrificing "rationality" in the international arena and "freedom" in the domestic sphere. The elite community in America is now ethically bankrupt.

Consequently, introducing the concept of Sacred Ignorance not only resolves the paradox in the work of Mearsheimer and Walt but also enriches structural realism by providing a more precise, nuanced, and flexible causal mechanism. This concept teaches us that rationality is not a perpetual given but a fragile product requiring a healthy discursive ecosystem—an ecosystem that can be targeted and destroyed.

This framework demonstrates that ideology ("Sacred Ignorance") determines "how" a state thinks and "what" decisions it makes in "low-cost domains," whereas structure ("international anarchy") determines "how far" it can proceed down this irrational path. This is the answer to the realist paradox: how can a domestic variable override systemic logic? This override is possible only up to the threshold of "existential threat." One must never forget that the anarchic structure of the international system ultimately sets the final boundary for all ideological games. Beyond this boundary, the iron base of geopolitical realities will ruthlessly prevail. When the cost of a policy crosses the critical threshold and poses an "existential threat" to a superpower's security or geopolitical standing, the iron logic of structure will overwhelm the fragile superstructure of ideology. The dynamics surrounding a potential conflict between Israel and Iran serve as a clear example: while "Sacred Ignorance" allows Washington to support the war in Gaza, this same logic vetoes direct U.S. entry into a full-scale war with Iran —which is considered a strategic and intolerable cost. This distinction itself testifies to the ultimate superiority of structure; even the most powerful domestic ideologies cannot withstand the imperatives of survival in the anarchic international system.

Countering deterministic readings of structural realism, this research argues that the relationship between the structure of the international system and domestic agency should not be understood as a one-way determinism, but rather as a dialectical interaction. In this model, the phenomenon of "Sacred Ignorance"—as a discursive construct in the domestic sphere—defines and limits the "space of political possibility", while the ultimate constraints of this space are determined by the survival requirements of the anarchic structure. At the point where costs exceed the tolerable threshold, we will witness the decisive dominance of structural logic over ideology, even if the mechanisms of "Sacred Ignorance" remain fully active. This framework treats "Sacred Ignorance" not as a supernatural force, but as an intervening variable that can distort the relationship between "objective national interest" (measured by indicators) and "implemented policy"—as long as the cost of this deviation does not exceed the threshold of tolerance.

In conclusion, the U.S.-Israel relationship is not a complete exception to realism, but rather exemplifies a strategic miscalculation under the shadow of ideology overriding rationality in the "lower-cost domains" of the

international system. This error, while not fatal in the short term, leads, if prolonged, to the slow bleeding of American power and the gradual shift of the geopolitical center of gravity to the East. "Sacred Ignorance" must be seen not as a simple political disagreement, but as a systemic disease that simultaneously targets and disrupts both the rationality of domestic governance and the logic of survival in the international system.

9. Introduction to a Project: The Necessity of a 'Second Enlightenment'

If the first Enlightenment was reason's battle for liberation from the prison of religious dogmas and political despotism, today we stand on the threshold of a 'Second Enlightenment'—a battle to liberate reason from the new prison of 'political sanctity' and dominant ideologies that, under the guise of modern values, immunize themselves from critique. Just as Kant raised the slogan "Dare to know" (*Sapere Aude*) against the authority of the Church, the slogan this time is "Dare to critique power."

The first Enlightenment in the 18th century began with the aim of liberating humanity from the domination of the Church and the absolute authority of monarchs. Philosophers like Kant, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Hume rose to defend "reason," "the right to free thought," and "secular and moral governance" (Kant, 1784/1996). The Enlightenment, as an era emphasizing reason, science, and freedom, had extensive impacts beyond Europe's borders, shaping the foundations of the most modern political, social, and cultural structures. The consequences of this period manifested not only in Europe but throughout the world, paving the way for the age of revolutions, democracies, and the development of science.

This article has demonstrated how the mechanism of "Sacred Ignorance," in a modern form and centered on a specific relationship, has not only deranged a superpower's foreign policy from the path of rationality but has also exposed its democratic foundations—freedom of speech and academic independence—to a "Genocide of Freedom." This situation is not merely a political crisis; it is an epistemological bankruptcy; a sign of regression to a pre-modern era where "sanctity" replaces "truth."

History, however, is inspiring: structures of repression—from the Church's Inquisition to totalitarian book burnings—have ultimately always collapsed in the face of reason's steadfast taboo-breaking. The ongoing collapse of the narrative hegemony of Israel's supporters is the first sign of this new birth. The time has now come to transform these discursive fissures into an organized intellectual movement. The "Second Enlightenment" is an essential response to this question: What can we — as the scientific

community, intellectuals, and citizens—do to repel this new assault on the domain of reason and freedom?

History teaches us that every period of intellectual repression has ultimately turned into its opposite and given rise to liberating movements. The structural corruption of the medieval Church and the systematic suppression of freedom of thought, although lasting for centuries, ultimately led to the birth of the 'first Enlightenment'—a movement that restored rationality, science, and human rights to their rightful place. Today, the world's academic and intellectual community faces a similar challenge: the systematic suppression of free speech under the guise of 'political sanctity' and 'ideological limitations.'

Just as the medieval Church determined the boundaries of thought by creating an 'Index of Prohibited Books' and the 'Inquisition,' modern mechanisms of censorship—from ideological labeling to cutting research funding—are now determining the 'permissible limits of thought.' But history has proven that no power can keep thought imprisoned forever. The corruption of the Church ultimately led to the Renaissance, Reformation, and the Age of Enlightenment. The current suppression of free speech must inevitably lead to a 'Second Enlightenment'—a movement where rationality rises up not only against religious dogmas but also against new political and ideological idols.

- The Second Enlightenment has three main missions:

1. Exposing the mechanisms of 'Sacred Ignorance' in its modern forms.

2. Redefining the relationship between political power and scientific truth-seeking.

3. Establishing independent intellectual institutions immune to ideological pressures.

Just as Kant, in the first Enlightenment, considered the courage to think the duty of every human, the Second Enlightenment makes the 'courage to critique power' the primary mission of the academic community. We stand on the threshold of a historic transformation—a transformation for which the current suppression is merely a necessary prelude.

In a world where technology has peaked but freedom of thought is being alarmingly restricted in some of the most advanced societies, the necessity of returning to the principles of the "Enlightenment Age" is felt more than ever. Rationality, science, and freedom of expression—the three main pillars of modern civilization—today face threats from ideological, political, and

religious forces that have entered public discourse clothed in sanctity and self-righteousness (Habermas, 1987; Pinker, 2018).

The first Enlightenment took shape in an environment full of suffocation, and now the American and Western academic community is witnessing the same suffocating atmosphere surrounding free thought. Consequently, just as the scientists of the first Enlightenment risked their lives to create a movement aimed at liberation from the ruling intellectual tyranny, it is now essential for a similar current to emerge, albeit in a different form, and to promote free thinking, leveraging the proliferation of various technologies. It is crucial to understand that the continuation of the current situation is extremely dangerous because silence in the face of the ruling intellectual tyranny not only fails to improve conditions but ultimately leads to the intensification of the suppression of free speech.

In America, a country that once proudly defended freedom of speech, open academic space, and scientific rationality, we now witness the narrowing of the space for critique under pretexts such as "being too political," "antisemitism," or "protecting national values" (Butt, 2021). Under such conditions, defending critical thinking, free speech, and rationality is not only a moral duty but a vital necessity for preserving the foundations of democracy.

The university, as an institution that should serve critical thinking, scientific examination, and the expansion of the frontiers of knowledge, is currently under heavy political, economic, and ideological pressure. The silence or dismissal of professors who hold views opposing official policies (like Salaita or Hill) indicates the academic system's inability to defend its own mission (Chemerinsky, 2015). Without freedom of thought, no sustainable innovation, progress, or justice is possible (Nussbaum, 2010). *True knowledge is the ability to distance yourself from your own deepest beliefs and subject them to critique.*

The mission of the academic community in this crisis is a dual and critical role. On one hand, this institution is obligated, through adherence to research ethics and scientific methodology, to provide a space for the impartial and critical examination of all aspects of this complex conflict—including criticism of Hamas's actions, Israel's policies, and the role of foreign powers. On the other hand, the university must stand as a bulwark against any ideological pressure—whether from power institutions or pressure groups—to protect the "intellectual independence" that is the essence of knowledge advancement. The university's silence in the face of state suppression or self-censorship due to fear of financial pressures is a blatant betrayal of the pursuit of truth as its inherent mission. Otherwise, serious damage will be inflicted upon human civilization, because

civilizations die not by the attack of strangers, but by the silence of their own.

The issue at stake now is something far beyond a failed foreign policy; the main issue is a reckoning with the very concept of American democracy. When the "First Amendment"—the pillar of American democracy—bows before a "political taboo," one can no longer speak of democracy; rather, we are witnessing a new tyranny named "the ruling intellectual dictatorship." This phenomenon is reinforced by three mechanisms: first, the distortion of public discourse through systematic labeling; second, the capture of democratic institutions by lobbies that have transferred power from the people to a wealthy minority; and third, the surrender of the academic community to this assault, which is the greatest betrayal of the university's mission.

- The Second Enlightenment has become necessary for the following six reasons, which collectively reveal the depth of the crisis:

1. **Assault on Democratic Foundations:** The systematic suppression of free speech directly contradicts the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The depth of this disaster becomes clear when we realize that three powerful forces—financial lobbies, apocalyptic political theology, and ideological labeling—are distorting the spirit of the Constitution to shield a failed foreign policy from accountability.

2. **The Lobby's Metastasis:** In the past, the Israel Lobby's influence was largely confined to the realm of foreign policy. Now, this influence has expanded to suppress the domestic sphere of the United States. Today, not only are academics suppressed for criticizing Israeli policies, but social activists, journalists, and even government employees face threats of dismissal and professional ruin. This trend signifies the transformation of an influential external institution into a threat to fundamental freedoms within the United States itself.

3. **Corruption of Democratic Balance:** While lobbying is itself a legal and recognized practice in the American political system—by both domestic and foreign entities—when the power of a particular lobby exceeds conventional limits, it can endanger the very foundations of democracy. Today, evidence suggests that the financial power and political influence of the Israel Lobby have disrupted the traditional balance between the will of the people and the influence of special interests. In this situation, the voice of an ordinary citizen carries far less weight in decision-making than the pressure of a powerful lobby. This imbalance allows this lobby not only to influence political orientations but also to disrupt the internal regulatory mechanisms of democracy—including free speech and scientific critique—by creating an atmosphere of terror.

4. **The Complicity of Silence:** The silence and complicity of the academic community provide the oxygen needed for the continuation of this "intellectual dictatorship." History has always taught that tyranny arrives not first with weapons, but by dictating the "permissible limits of thought." In the Middle Ages, the Church defined this circle with concepts like "heresy" and "apostasy," deeming opponents worthy of the stake. Today, power lobbies play the same role with labels like "anti-Semite" and "saboteur," threatening every critical voice not with flames, but with the fire of burning social and professional standing. The most dangerous aspect of this process is its normalization and acceptance by institutions fundamentally established to critique power: universities. When the university retreats from its role as the bulwark of free thought, the collapse of the entire democratic structure is only one step away.

5. **Critique as a Democratic Immune System:** Criticism is the guarantor of a democracy's health; a political immune system that prevents governance from devolving into tyranny. When the voice of criticism is silenced under the pretext of "national security" or "political sanctity," rulers, in a vacuum of accountability, are step by step drawn towards absolute power. Immunity from critique is the primary weapon of every autocracy. We witness a concrete example of this moral and political collapse today in Israel: a state that once saw itself as a victim of genocide is now, under the protection of unconditional foreign support and a domestic space devoid of critique, accused of orchestrating a human catastrophe. The silence of critics has allowed extremist right-wingers to transgress ethical boundaries not only in action but also in rhetoric, openly engaging in "ethnic cleansing" and denying the fundamental rights of Palestinians. This is the future of any society that sacrifices criticism on the altar of the illusion of "consensus."

6. **The Pathology of the 'Special Relationship':** The tragic paradox of the special relationship is this: America's unconditional support has, in the long term, not only failed to secure Israel's safety but has pathologically skewed its internal political dynamics. By eliminating the natural risks of an aggressive foreign policy—namely the economic, security, and international costs—Washington has effectively disabled the "framework of punishment and reward" in Israeli democracy. Under such conditions, populist right-wing politicians—who make grandiose security promises—never pay the real price of failure and emerge victorious. In contrast, moderate and conciliatory currents that warn of the long-term costs of these policies are eliminated from the political arena. This support has compelled Israel to make unrealistic security calculations. From a realist perspective, a country of Israel's size and population is in no way capable of simultaneously conducting military operations on such a large scale in 6 Middle Eastern countries, a protracted war in Gaza, and the suppression of Palestinians in the West Bank. This artificial "security bubble" has fractured Israeli society from within and made it vulnerable to a potential internal crisis in the

future. Therefore, the special relationship is not a "strategic solidarity," but a "pathological solidarity" that ultimately leads to a security dead end and social collapse for Israel itself.

This trajectory steers Israel toward a security dead-end and potential social collapse. The continuation of the occupation and the failure to resolve the Palestinian conflict constitute a demographic and security time bomb. A state cannot indefinitely rule over millions of people devoid of political rights and remain secure. This reality presents two conceivable outcomes: the formal establishment of an apartheid system or ethnic cleansing. Unconditional American support acts as a political "narcotic" that empowers Israel in the short term but, in the long run, leads to addiction, a distortion of security perceptions, the paralysis of self-correcting democratic mechanisms, and ultimately, the weakening of Israel itself. This dynamic illustrates a classic tragedy: an action (unconditional support) undertaken with good intentions (guaranteeing security) leads to disaster due to a failure to comprehend its long-term consequences. Thus, "Sacred Ignorance" not only targets the rationality of the patron (the United States) but, by poisoning the political environment of the ally (Israel), also places the genuine security of both nations in jeopardy.

Considering these six reasons—the first three targeting the foundations of American democracy and the latter three revealing its moral and strategic consequences—the necessity of a "Sacred Rebellion" is revealed not as an option, but as a moral and patriotic duty. It must be noted that nothing but "truth" is sacred. This is why rebellion against the status quo, which seeks to suppress freedom and truth, is considered sacred. On the other hand, this rebellion is sacred because the powers-that-be will suppress critics as they did in the past, and just as free thinking in the Middle Ages was accompanied by threats of burning intellectuals at the stake, free thinkers and critics of the status quo today must pay a heavy price for it. The sanctity of this rebellion stems not from a religious or ideological source, but from loyalty to "truth" and the acceptance of "personal costs" in defending it. Here, "sacred" is not a dogma, but an ethical stance.

In the current situation, the label of antisemitism, along with the use of apocalyptic thinking and sacralization, is the primary strategy for suppressing free thinkers. Therefore, a Sacred Rebellion must seek to counter the ruling intellectual tyranny and the suppression of free speech. Sacred Rebellion does not mean creating unrest and chaos, but rather signifies scientific confrontation in a calm space for the purpose of rational opposition to the ruling intellectual tyranny. This rebellion seeks to enlighten public opinion and raise awareness about the necessity of free thinking, the dangers of intellectual dictatorship, and the consequences of suppressing the scientific community. Since Sacred Ignorance is powerless in the face of the power of knowledge and has always been defeated, the

more the space for free thought expands, the more Sacred Ignorance is exposed.

- The Universal Ethical Imperative and the Logic of 'Sacred Ignorance'

At the core of the current conflict lies a fundamental confrontation: the confrontation between knowledge and critical rationality on one hand, and "Sacred Ignorance" on the other. This confrontation can be clearly observed in dealing with the tragedy of the Holocaust. The critical intellectual condemns this crime based on historical evidence and a universal ethical principle: the slaughter of innocent people, solely due to their ethnic, racial, or religious affiliations, is abhorrent and unacceptable. In contrast, "Sacred Ignorance" seeks to reduce this condemnation to a specific ethnic or religious loyalty. This attitude, by transforming a human catastrophe into the identity-based property of a specific group, simultaneously betrays the victims of that crime and paves the way for the repetition of similar catastrophes. Rationality condemns the Holocaust as a symbol of the peak of racist evil; "Sacred Ignorance" turns it into a taboo to make criticism of a state impossible. This is where the real battle emerges: a battle over whether ethics are universal or tribal.

The passage of time has placed other scenes of this universal tragedy before the eyes of humanity. The Rwandan genocide in 1994 was another symbol of this sinister dynamic; where one ethnic majority targeted another for annihilation simply for being 'other.' Any awakened conscience that condemns the Holocaust is, to the same degree and intensity, compelled to expose the crimes in Rwanda, Bosnia, and today in Gaza. In this confrontation, the identity of the victims is not determinative; what is determinative is the ever-living principle of ethics: the mass killing of defenseless humans, under any title and anywhere, is a crime against humanity. Silence in the face of savagery, regardless of the color of the flag or the name of the victim, is complicity with savagery. This is the ultimate test of the universality of our ethical claims.

What is happening to the Palestinians is another manifestation of this sinister pattern. The life of every innocent civilian trampled in this conflict breaks the universal covenant of ethics. Yet, "Sacred Ignorance" has successfully transformed this simple confrontation of "humanity versus savagery" into a tribal battle of "us versus them." This mechanism divides the world into two camps: on one side, "co-religionists" whose suffering evokes outcry, and on the other, "others" whose deaths fade into silence. In the light of this flawed logic, Western support for Israel—even when it clearly transgresses the boundaries of human rights and international law—is sanctified not as a political error, but as a "defense of shared values." The suppression of free speech within Western societies is the completing ring

of this process; a desperate attempt to silence any voice that challenges this false dichotomy and reminds us that ethics are either universal, or they do not exist at all.

This crisis is not confined to one front or camp. Just as a front of "Sacred Ignorance" in the West places Israel in a circle of immunity, a similar front in the Islamic world may also fall into the same trap by reducing this conflict to a religious battle and offering unconditional support to the "in-group"—regardless of its positions and actions. What is sacrificed in the middle is the life of the innocent human and the universal principle of ethics. "Sacred Ignorance," wherever it appears and under any ideological guise, by fueling the dichotomy of "us" and "them," sanctifies violence and justifies victimization. The duty of the Second Enlightenment is to expose this sinister mechanism on all fronts. This movement must show that the real battle is not between civilizations or religions, but between rationality and ethics on one hand, and ideological savagery on the other.

The ethical logic for condemning the Holocaust is universal: the massacre of people because of their identity, regardless of what that identity is, is condemnable. This principle is unified and admits no exceptions. Therefore, the same human conscience that condemns the genocide of Jews and the massacre of Tutsis cannot remain silent in the face of Palestinian suffering. In fact, the stability and sincerity of an ethical principle are determined in the difficult test of its "non-exceptionality." When the condemnation of one genocide becomes dependent on geography, religion, or politics, that principle dies and is replaced by hypocrisy. What we are witnessing today is a test for liberal Western values: Do the universal declarations of human rights have the capacity to condemn everyone's suffering, or are they merely a tool for one-sided judgment? Silence in the face of the slaughter in Gaza is not a political stance, but a betrayal of the very ethical foundations that Western civilization claims to uphold. This is where "Sacred Ignorance," by immunizing one side from criticism, not only betrays the victims but also corrodes from within the moral legitimacy of the self-proclaimed guardians of human rights.

- 'Sacred Ignorance' as a Mechanism of 'Othering' and Ideological Reproduction

On the domestic front, the "Genocide of Freedom" advances with the same logic of "Sacred Ignorance." In this model, every American citizen who dares to challenge Israel's policies is immediately exiled to the camp of the "other"—they are no longer a critic with arguments, but a "domestic alien" whose career, reputation, and future must be sacrificed. In contrast, Israel —as the "absolute us"—is placed in an immune sanctuary where any action, from killing civilians to violating international law, is considered pre-justified. Here, the standard for judgment is not humanity or ethics, but

tribal loyalty. "Sacred Ignorance" suspends ethical judgment and replaces it with a simple but devastating question: "Whose side are you on?" In such a space, the "us" are permitted any action, and the "other" deserve any suppression. This is not democracy; it is the rule of a new political cult.

This division of the world into "us" and "other," the central mechanism of "Sacred Ignorance," is reminiscent of the concept of "Othering" in critical theory; a process whereby a group, by denying shared humanity, paves the way for the moral disregard of the other group's rights (Said, 1978). In this framework, the suffering of the "other" is not only ignored but actively justified. As Bauman (1989) shows in his analysis of the Holocaust, the first step on the path to any organized violence is defining the "other" as "non-human" or "less human"—a prerequisite that "Sacred Ignorance" perfectly fulfills by sacralizing the "us" and demonizing the "other," representing a clear manifestation of the collapse of universal justice and ethics.

The Nazi regime was a classic and horrifying example of "Sacred Ignorance" in action. By sacralizing the "Aryan" race (us) and completely demonizing Jews (other), they created a discursive space where the destruction of millions of humans was considered not only non-ethical but a "sacred duty" to purify the world. It was this "lens of Sacred Ignorance" that, by disabling the rational and ethical mechanisms of the human mind, made possible the planning and execution of an industrial-administrative catastrophe like the Holocaust. In a word, Sacred Ignorance disables society's ethical immune system and renders it defenseless against the virus of autocracy and genocide.

Ultimately, the continuity of these policies can only be explained if we see "Sacred Ignorance" not as an intellectual deviation, but as an ideological imperative in the service of consolidating hegemony. This analysis reinforces a realist reading of ideology. As Guzzini (2004) notes in his rereading of the realist tradition, ideology and power are often intertwined; ideological discourses can be tools for justifying and entrenching domination (p. 540). Therefore, "Sacred Ignorance," in the final analysis, is both a discursive phenomenon and a realist strategy for maintaining the monopoly on power and wealth by a specific coalition.

Philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Hannah Arendt taught us that indifference to injustice is a form of cooperation with it. From this perspective, the main lesson of the Holocaust is not only the condemnation of Nazism but also a warning about the 'normalization' of crime in any time and place—a warning that turns the current silence in the face of civilian suffering into a serious ethical question. The ethical analogy is this: if we condemn the international community's silence in the 1930s in the face of Nazi crimes, is a similar silence in the face of today's atrocities not equally condemnable? This analogy is not for historical equation, but to revive a

universal ethical principle: 'Never Again' must mean 'for *all*.' Neutrality in the face of crime is, in fact, complicity with the criminal, and silence in the face of today's oppression is a repetition of those catastrophic historical silences.

Hence, the historic mission of the Second Enlightenment is to confront this sinister mechanism of division. Today's battle is a battle between human-centric knowledge and tribal "Sacred Ignorance." Knowledge, relying on a universal ethics, recognizes the inherent dignity of every human. But "Sacred Ignorance," by building identity walls, divides the world into an "us" worthy of all rights and an "other" deserving of no rights. Knowledge weighs everyone with one scale; "Sacred Ignorance," with a blinding duality, ignores a part of humanity and justifies its destruction. The Second Enlightenment is a movement to restore that single ethical scale.

In democratic systems, "Sacred Ignorance" manifests itself in the form of an ideological selection process. Power lobbies, by controlling career paths, inject "us" loyal to the dominant discourse into decision-making centers. This dynamic can be clearly observed in the implicit requirement to declare loyalty to Israel in American electoral campaigns. In contrast, the "other"—the critical voices—are expelled from the public sphere and even from the traditional bastion of free thought, the university. This systematic intellectual homogenization is precisely the concrete embodiment of what the prominent sociologist Pierre Bourdieu calls the "ideological reproduction of the ruling elites" (Bourdieu, 1989); a mechanism in which power institutions—including scientific institutions—instead of nurturing critical thought, engage in selecting and promoting the "us" and systematically eliminating the "other," ultimately perpetuating themselves in a closed cycle of power.

This mechanism of "selecting the us" has led to an astonishing paradox at the heart of American democracy: failure is not only not punished, it is rewarded. Consider the period known as the "unipolar world" (1991-2017); an era in which U.S. foreign policy was replete with catastrophic strategic mistakes based on the illusion of liberal hegemony—from the Iraq war based on false pretenses to NATO expansion into Eastern Europe which led to increased tensions. Based on democratic logic, the designers and executors of these policies should have been permanently banished from the public sphere for their mistakes. Yet, we witness the opposite reality: the same figures—from war architects to national security advisors—have not only not been banished but hold permanent chairs in influential think tanks, university positions, and are permanent fixtures at the heads of news networks. This phenomenon is only understandable within the framework of "Sacred Ignorance": loyalty to the dominant dogma (unconditional support for hegemonic policies) is considered so valuable that it overshadows any operational failure. In this system, "being wrong" is forgivable, provided it

was done in the path of the "right faith." This is the sign of a mature new "political church," where "ideological orthodoxy" trumps "practical competence" and "democratic accountability."

"Sacred Ignorance" has now reached such a horrifying level of normalization that it not only makes the genocide of Palestinians acceptable but has turned the United States into an active partner in this catastrophe. In this intellectual constellation, Israel as the "us" holds an unlimited guarantee card, while the Palestinians as the "other" are condemned to destruction. Senator Lindsey Graham explicitly revealed this logic:

*"We are in a religious war here, I am with Israel. Do whatever you have to do to defend yourself, level the place." (*Democracy Now, 2023)

This statement clearly shows how "Sacred Ignorance" sanctifies the greatest crimes under the cover of "self-defense." The sinister paradox is that the same senator who openly calls for the destruction of a residential area continues his work with complete impunity, while a professor who condemns violence faces dismissal and suppression. This duality shows the depth of the disaster: "Sacred Ignorance" not only desiccates the human conscience but inverts ethical standards. As history has repeatedly proven, no oppression is more destructive than that which clothes itself in the garb of virtue.

Field evidence and research reports clearly reveal the United States' vital role in continuing the current crisis. According to independent analyses, including research by William Hartung and Linda J. Bilmes from the Harvard Kennedy School, U.S. military aid to Israel since October 2023 has exceeded $21 billion, and the total U.S. operational costs in the region are estimated between $31.35 and $33.77 billion (Hartung, 2025; Bilmes, 2025).

Amidst this, the deadly silence of the American academic community in the face of this overt complicity is itself further testimony to the depth of the "ruling intellectual tyranny." When academics refrain from condemning this ethical catastrophe for fear of professional and social consequences, they in fact grant added legitimacy to state policies and show how successful the apparatus of "Sacred Ignorance" has been in stifling the voice of freedom within the United States itself.

What is happening in the suppression of the American academic community is a "Genocide of Freedom"—the systematic destruction of the possibility for critique and independent thought. While international institutions speak of "genocide" in Gaza, American universities have not only remained silent but have become tools for suppressing protesting students. These two genocides—one against the bodies of Palestinians and the other against the spirit of freedom—are in fact two sides of the same coin: both proceed with

the identical logic of "Sacred Ignorance." On one side, supporters of these policies proudly defend the genocide, and on the other, every critical voice is stifled in its infancy.

This mechanism reproduces the same pattern witnessed in the Crusades and religious massacres throughout history: "Sacred Ignorance," by dividing the world into "us" and "other," sanctifies crime against the enemy. In such an order, laws are only for show. As George Orwell wrote in *Animal Farm*: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." This seemingly humorous sentence is, in fact, the complete formulation of the logic of "Sacred Ignorance": creating a society where formal equality is a cover for fundamental inequality; a place where the "us" can break the laws and the "other" must pay for breaking laws they never had a role in drafting.

This system has created a new "aristocracy": the "more equal" who, due to their unquestioning loyalty to the dominant discourse, see themselves as beyond law and critique. "Sacred Ignorance," at its most fundamental level, denies the ability for "independent and impartial thinking." Its logic is based on a simple and destructive principle: the "us" are inherently superior and deserving of all privileges, while the "other" are inherently inferior and deserving of deprivation. Imposing this "discriminatory logic" on the scientific community is the most dangerous assault of "Sacred Ignorance," because it turns knowledge—which is inherently universal and impartial—into the servant of a tribal ideology.

- Confronting 'Sacred Ignorance': The Imperative of the Second Enlightenment

In the face of the Genocide of Freedom and the domination of Sacred Ignorance, the only possible path is a Sacred Rebellion—not a rebellion to negate faith, but to restore faith to its true place; a place where reason, ethics, and truth coexist. This rebellion is the reflection of the "Second Enlightenment": an effort to liberate faith from the captivity of ideology and power. As Miroslav Volf emphasizes in his seminal work *Exclusion and Embrace* (1996), real liberation from the cycle of violence is only possible when a person can, in the midst of suffering, give an ethical and conscious response to evil, not one based on hatred or imitation of violence. Volf shows that "opening embrace" towards the other is not meant as compromise with injustice, but a form of sacred rebellion against the logic of exclusion and revenge. From this perspective, the "Sacred Rebellion" proposed in this article can be seen as a continuation of that ethical tradition which seeks to reclaim faith from the domination of ideology and violence and transform it into a force for rational and free resistance.

Stanley Hauerwas, in his works particularly *Resident Aliens* (1989) and *A Community of Character* (1981), warns that when religious faith mixes with political power, it deviates from the path of truth and integrity. He distinguishes between "authentic faith"—which calls for humility, justice, and honesty before God—and "politicized faith"—which serves to legitimize power. From this viewpoint, the sacralization of politics and the use of religion to justify the suppression of free speech are signs of faith's fall from the realm of integrity to that of expediency. A sacred rebellion against such deviation is, in fact, a return to authentic and free faith.

Reinhold Niebuhr, in his famous work Moral Man and Immoral Society (1932), shows that while the individual human can be ethical and benevolent, societies and states are often caught in the logic of power and interests (Niebuhr, 1932/1960). He sees this tension between Christian ethics and political realism as the heart of modern political tragedy. Based on Niebuhr's thought, ethics in U.S. foreign policy are meaningful only when they can resist the temptation of "absolutizing one's own good" (Niebuhr, 1944). When the United States looks at foreign policy through the lens of sanctity and divine mission, it has, in fact, distanced itself from Christian ethics and entered the realm of Sacred Ignorance. Consequently, the "Second Enlightenment" must be a return to that Niebuhrian self-awareness—namely, the acceptance of ethical limitations in politics and the necessity of humility in power.

In this context, Jürgen Habermas's thought on "Communicative Action" can enhance the theoretical richness of the "Second Enlightenment" concept. From Habermas's perspective, modern rationality is manifested not in the domination of instruments or power, but in the possibility of free and equal dialogue among social actors (Habermas, 1984, 1987). Freedom of dialogue, in his interpretation, is a prerequisite for the formation of truth and the basis of communicative ethics (Habermas, 1990). When this dialogue is disrupted under political or economic pressure, modern rationality collapses and is replaced by "instrumental rationality"; the very logic that has, in the present age, enlisted the university and media in the service of ideology and the interests of power. Therefore, the "Second Enlightenment" should be not merely a movement to restore free speech, but an effort to revive the communicative capacity of modern reason and rebuild the ethics of dialogue against the domination of lobbies and neo-sacralization.

The "Sacred Rebellion" is a necessity for reconstructing the relationship between reason, faith, and freedom—not in opposition to religion, but against any religion that has become an instrument of power. In a world where sanctity has been enlisted in the service of politics, rational resistance is the last refuge of true faith. If "Sacred Ignorance" is the weapon of the "Genocide of Freedom," the "Second Enlightenment" is a blueprint for the resistance and regeneration of freedom. This project is a

response to the systematic process of the "slaughter of thought" detailed in the preceding sections.

10- The Call for a Second Enlightenment

A fundamental question can be posed from the perspective of offensive realism—an approach whose prominent figure is John Mearsheimer: Is "Sacred Ignorance" an independent driving force, or merely an ideological tool in the service of justifying and cementing a strategic alliance based on power calculations—however flawed? In other words, are we facing a "material base" (the interests of lobbies, geopolitical perceptions) for which "Sacred Ignorance" constitutes the ideological "superstructure"?

This article argues that such a dualistic (material/ideological) separation is insufficient for analyzing this specific phenomenon. We are confronted with a "cycle of mutual reinforcement": initial material interests (such as Israel's role as a strategic ally) created the space for the emergence of supporting lobbies and ideologies. But over time, this ideological "Sacred Ignorance" has itself transformed into an independent and determining "material power." This ideology now shapes the policymaking path so profoundly—by controlling discourse, legislation, and budgeting—that it renders any rational calculation of national interests impossible. Therefore, "Sacred Ignorance" is not merely an ideological cover for power; it has itself become a new infrastructure of power within Western democracies.

Consequently, the call for a "Second Enlightenment" and "Sacred Rebellion" is not a denial of the logic of power, but rather the presentation of a "realist strategy for redefining national interests." Breaking the ideological monopoly of "Sacred Ignorance" is an essential prerequisite for liberating the intellectual and political space, making realistic strategic calculations—which undoubtedly include exiting current costly policies—feasible once again. This rebellion is a practical prelude to correcting flawed power calculations.

The "Second Enlightenment" is a call to reclaim rationality and freedom from the grip of power structures that have hidden themselves in the cloak of sanctity. This nascent movement seeks not to negate faith, but to liberate reason from the domination of sacralizing ideologies—ideologies that turn religion, race, nation, or even science into idols to dominate free thought.

The Second Enlightenment is not merely a philosophical theory or a reaction to modern crises; it is a global call for the reconstruction of human thought. In a world where truth has become a commodity, science a tool of power, and freedom a class privilege, the Second Enlightenment is an invitation to reclaim reason, dignity, and human will. This path is not easy, but it is necessary; for without it, modern civilization is doomed to repeat the darkness of the Middle Ages in modern garb.

- The Five Pillars of the Second Enlightenment

1. **Restructuring the Educational System:** The first pillar of this enlightenment is the reconstruction of the educational system. Modern education must be founded on scientific skepticism, critical thinking, and cosmopolitan ethics. In a world where technology can spread lies faster than truth, nurturing a generation capable of distinguishing reality from narrative is a vital duty. Schools and universities must transform from institutions of ideological transmission into institutions nurturing reason and conscience. Although power lobbies have extensively infiltrated the political structure, the educational system must remain immune from this influence and promote independent thinking. Scientific skepticism was the greatest gift of the Enlightenment to humanity; and today we are in danger of losing this heritage. Education must not accustom minds to obey power or accept pre-packaged truths, but must cultivate the ability to ask questions, doubt, and think. Schools and universities must be redefined: not as factories for degrees and ideology, but as workshops for thought and

conscience. In this new system, a teacher's value lies not in repeating memorized content, but in fostering students' moral rationality and intellectual courage. Critical thinking begins when we dare to question political sacred cows.

2. **Redefining the Role of Religion in Society:** The second pillar is redefining the role of religion in society. Religion can be a source of meaning and ethics, but when enlisted in the service of politics, it becomes a tool of domination. In the "Second Enlightenment," religion will be not a means of social control, but a personal and cultural force for spiritual transcendence. Separating religious institutions from political power is not hostility towards faith, but safeguarding true faith—a faith free from imposition and coercion. No injustice should be justified under the shadow of religion, and individuals, regardless of religion, nationality, gender, or race, must be respected as human beings.

   The Second Enlightenment does not intend to eliminate religion, but rather to reconstruct the boundary between personal faith and political power. Religion, if in the service of meaning, ethics, and humanity, is a source of light; but when it becomes an instrument of governance, it turns into a heavy shadow upon freedom. We must reach a point where no human or government has the right to consider its own belief more sacred than the reason and freedom of others. Any stereotyping, collective labeling, or aggression against adherents of a religion—be it Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or any other belief—is a clear violation of the fundamental principles of civil society and reinforces the very logic of imposition that the Second Enlightenment fights. Jews and Evangelical Christians, like all citizens, deserve security, respect, and freedom of belief. What is being critiqued here is not individuals' religious identity, but the politicized ideology that exploits these identities to sanctify unethical policies. Defending a

Palestinian's rights should not be construed as anti-Semitism, and defending an Israeli's rights should not be construed as Islam phobia. Faith becomes dangerous when it seeks to govern. History has proven that political theology is the death of critical thought. This pattern—replicated in Stalinist communism as a "secular religion" and in some Sharia-based governments in another form—is a global warning about the merger of any absolutist ideology with the mechanisms of governance.

3. **Insisting on Human Rights, Media Freedom, and University Independence:** The third pillar is insistence on human rights, media freedom, and university independence. These three pillars are the foundation of modern democracy. Freedom of speech is not a privilege but a natural human right; the media must be able to challenge power, and universities must be sanctuaries for unconventional thought, even if it conflicts with popular beliefs or political sacred cows. How is it that a U.S. Senator or politician can explicitly defend the slaughter of Palestinians, yet anyone who opposes the genocide of Palestinians is considered a supporter of terrorism? Politicians should not set the intellectual framework for universities and engage in suppressing critics and free thinkers.

   The university must be the last bastion of truth. If universities become dependent on financial and political institutions, collective rationality collapses. Therefore, the intellectual and financial independence of universities must be the most sacred principle of modern society. No government, party, or lobby should determine the path of scientific inquiry. A university is only valuable when the voices of opponents, critics, and creators are heard within it—even if these voices challenge the existing order. No idea, even the most sacred ones, should be immune from critique.

   Media and technology today are as powerful as governments. They can

build or destroy minds. The Second Enlightenment requires these tools to be transparent and accountable. Algorithms must not replace human conscience; platforms must not be the arbiters of truth. Every citizen must know what is being seen, what is being hidden, and why.

4. **Civic and Ethical Resistance:** The fourth pillar is civic and ethical resistance against any form of censorship or forced sanctification. The "Second Enlightenment" calls us to stand against any power that seeks to restrict thought—whether that power arises from the state, religion, capital, or technology. Resistance here is manifested not through violence, but through dialogue, writing, research, and steadfastness against the distortion of truth. The attempt by the U.S. government to control university budgets and force them to comply with the suppression of critical students is in serious conflict with the principles of academic independence. A university dies when its bank account replaces its intellectual account.
   Civic resistance means that just as free thinkers in the first Enlightenment paid heavy prices and lost their lives, now too, even at the cost of the closure of great American universities like Harvard and Columbia, universities must, through civic resistance, preserve their independence and not allow the intervention of intellectual tyranny and the biased imposition of thought. The Second Enlightenment is a revolution to restore rationality to its governing place in humanity's intellectual life.
   This civic resistance in the academic sphere can take multiple forms: from symbolic "silence strikes" in protest of a colleague's dismissal or censorship, to establishing independent chairs and study groups outside the direct influence of power institutions for researching taboo subjects; from professors signing collective and open statements defending academic freedom and condemning suppression, to holding alternative seminars and roundtables when the university institution

refuses to host critical speakers. Even actions such as non-voluntary cooperation with internal committees with political mandates, or the public disclosure of administrative letters containing pressure to censor, can increase the costs for university management of implementing repressive policies. These peaceful yet resolute actions, while preserving academic dignity, delineate the red lines of resistance against intellectual tyranny.

5. **A Global Alliance of Reason and Conscience:** The fifth pillar is a global alliance of reason and conscience. No country alone can resist the tide of prejudice, censorship, and Sacred Ignorance. The world needs a new solidarity—an alliance among thinkers, teachers, students, writers, and all awakened consciences. The Second Enlightenment will be realized when rationality is not limited by geographical borders and the free human being, regardless of language or religion, is placed at the center of the global system. The future world will be built only through the cooperation of aware humans, not through the competition of powers.
   This alliance begins with you. With the first courage to speak truth in your workplace, the first critical question in the classroom, the first letter you write to your congressional representative, and the first time you support a colleague under pressure. The Second Enlightenment is not an event; it is a way of life. From today, from this moment, begin living in this manner.

- Realist Strategies for Resistance

Realist resistance strategies include the following:

- **Creating a Counter-Lobby:** Forming institutions comprised of academics, lawyers, and activists for direct lobbying in Congress aimed at passing transparency laws for all foreign aid and influences, thereby increasing the political cost of suppressing freedom of speech.

The extensive impact of environmental lobbies in passing laws against polluting companies shows that this strategy is entirely practical within the American democratic framework. American history has witnessed numerous successes of such counter-lobbies.

- **Redefining National Security:** Producing discourse and research demonstrating that America's real national security lies not in continuing unconditional support, but in a stable and just Middle East. This work takes the monopoly on interpreting "national interest" out of the hands of specific actors. This is precisely what the American security community did after the failure in Vietnam, expanding the concept of security from purely military to economic and social dimensions.
- **Economic Independence for Intellectual Institutions:** Creating independent endowment funds for critical research, to free universities from economic dependence on centers of power and, consequently, from self-censorship. This is a realist maneuver to gain operational autonomy. The financial model of universities like Harvard, which manage their large endowments, is a practical example of this independence.

From a purely realist perspective, these strategies are not utopianism, but an effort to change the cost-benefit calculations of political actors. The ultimate goal is to increase the political and economic costs of continuing "Sacred Ignorance" and reduce its benefits for the powerholders. The "Sacred Rebellion" achieves victory when defending a failed policy becomes more costly for a senator or a university than violating the prevailing taboo. Therefore, the "Second Enlightenment" project is, in the final analysis, an ideological battle to change the balance of material power in favor of rationality and real national interests.

These realist strategies are essential for creating breathing room within power structures, but to guarantee the continuity and deepening of the "Second Enlightenment," they must be accompanied by a broader, community-based and international movement.

- The Path Forward: Completing the Democratic Revolution of Truth

1. Just as the "democratization of truth" from below—through civilians' mobile phones and social networks—shook the narrative foundations of "Sacred Ignorance," the primary mission of the "Second Enlightenment" is to complete this process and turn it into an organized and unstoppable current. This means establishing and strengthening independent grassroots institutions—from multilingual databases for archiving evidence of crimes to specialized verification networks—that can turn the flood of information into a solid dam against the censorship apparatus. We must not only democratize truth but institutionalize it; take it out of a passive state and turn it into a reciprocal weapon for systematic exposure and neutralizing propaganda. In this battle, every citizen's camera is a weapon, and every document is a protest.
2. On the international stage, it is essential that institutions, governments, and independent figures courageously stand up to the pressures of the power-ideology coalition and expose the mechanisms of "Sacred Ignorance" in global forums. This action requires unwavering practical and political support for international judicial bodies like the ICJ and the ICC, so that they can perform their duty of pursuing crimes under any pressure or threat. Furthermore, forming international coalitions of lawyers, intellectuals, and activists to document and legally pursue the "organized norm-shattering" of Israel's supporters can drastically increase the costs of this behavior for them. Silence in the face of blackmail is itself a form of complicity.

3. Finally, emphasis must be placed on the necessity of fundamental changes within Israeli society itself, for this country too has become the greatest victim of the "Sacred Ignorance" trap it was supposed to be saved by. Israeli citizens, intellectuals, journalists, and moderate politicians must realize that real security depends on exiting this vicious cycle of violence and aggression. They must courageously raise their voices in protest against their extremist government, strive to revive the rule of law and equality for all citizens, and, by recognizing the legitimate rights of Palestinians, pave the way for a just and lasting peace. A secure future for Israel is found not in eliminating the other, but in accepting coexistence with them. Saving Israel from itself is the greatest service to its people.

- The Final Choice for Civilization

In the end, the "Second Enlightenment" is the ideal of rebuilding human civilization based on reason, science, conscience, and freedom. This movement is a call to return to the values that liberated humanity from the darkness of the Middle Ages, but this time against new forms of darkness reproduced in the guise of technology, race, or faith. Undoubtedly, the future of humanity will be determined not by the sanctification of power, but by freedom of thought and the courage of inquiry.

The Second Enlightenment is not a choice; it is a necessity. We must either rise against sacred ideologies and intellectual tyranny, or witness the gradual collapse of freedom, science, and truth. On this path, a new human must be reborn—a human who dares to question, thinks, and finds their way by the light of reason and conscience, rather than through blind followership. The world of tomorrow will either be the child of the Second Enlightenment, or the victim of modern ignorance.

Although this article has analyzed the specific manifestation of the "Sacred Ignorance" phenomenon within the framework of U.S.-Israel relations, the nature of this pattern is inherently generalizable. The mechanisms that today suppress criticism of a foreign policy by combining the power of financial lobbies, ideological labeling, and apocalyptic sacralization can tomorrow be replicated around other vital issues—from climate change and social justice to the regulation of new technologies. What is of fundamental importance in this analysis is not the specific subject itself, but the identification and exposure of the "pattern of systematic suppression." Whenever a group of powerholders and ideologues can remove a subject from the realm of rational critique and place it within the sanctuary of political sanctity, the foundations of democracy are threatened. Therefore, the core lesson of this research, beyond the present case study, is a universal warning: Sacred Ignorance is a political virus that changes its host, but its pathogenicity remains constant. Resistance to it in one arena is practice for defending rationality and freedom in all arenas. The road ahead is not easy, but for the first time in history, humanity possesses tools of knowledge and communication capable of overcoming the darkness of Sacred Ignorance. This time, we will advance the Enlightenment not with torches, but with networks of knowledge and moral solidarity.

The Second Enlightenment is not a distant ideal, but a necessary path to rescue collective rationality from the clutches of self-righteous ideologies. This path begins with our first act of courage to question, is strengthened by civic resistance against censorship, and bears fruit through the reconstruction of knowledge institutions. The future of human civilization hinges on this simple yet fateful choice: the sanctity of power, or the power of rationality.

11 - Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that the threat to freedom of speech and scientific rationality in Western democracies, particularly the United States, is not merely a political conflict of opinions, but the emergence of a new "intellectual tyranny" that leverages the powerful mechanisms of "Sacred Ignorance." As the history of the Middle Ages and totalitarian regimes has taught us, when ideas—whether religious or secular—acquire an uncriticizable sanctity, the first victims are truth and human conscience. Science is criticizable, but revelation is not—and this is precisely the point of danger.

Our examination revealed that this phenomenon, in the contemporary American context, has coalesced around two main axes: First, the instrumental use of the accusation of "anti-Semitism" to suffocate any legitimate criticism of the Israeli government and the special relationship with it—an act that betrays the Jewish community through the deliberate conflation of Zionism and Judaism, while also eroding sensitivity towards real anti-Semitism. Second, the deployment of an apocalyptic ideology by Evangelical currents that, by sacralizing the State of Israel, places its policies within the realm of the "revelatory" and removes them from the sphere of rational critique. These two axes, backed by the financial resources and political influence of powerful lobbies, have instilled an atmosphere of fear and self-censorship in universities and media, to the extent that even discussing Palestinian human rights has become a costly and punishable act.

The consequence of this trend is not limited to a "Genocide of Freedom" on one specific issue. It jeopardizes the health of American democracy as a whole, tarnishes the global legitimacy of its academic institutions, and, by blocking the path of critique, steers foreign policy towards increasingly risky and irrational actions. The issue is not a "simple conflict of beliefs," but a "realist tool for maintaining hegemony."

Faced with this new darkness, a return to the principles of the "Enlightenment"—emphasis on reason, science, and freedom—is not a choice, but a necessity for survival. What we term the "Second Enlightenment" or "Sacred Rebellion" is a call for united and rational resistance. This movement necessitates the reconstruction of the educational system based on skepticism and critical thinking, the separation of religious institutions from the tools of political domination, the unconditional safeguarding of the independence of universities and media, and, ultimately, the creation of a global solidarity among all intellectuals and awakened consciences. The future of human civilization hinges on this choice: surrender to Sacred Ignorance and repeat the catastrophes of history, or stand firm for freedom of thought and build a world where the dignity of every human being—irrespective of religion, race, or nationality—

takes precedence over any ideology and power. The path is arduous, but it is the only way forward.

In final summation, the "Second Enlightenment" can be seen as an endeavor to reconnect Habermas's "communicative reason" with Foucault's "critique of power"; that is, to rebuild the capacity for free dialogue against the mechanisms of domination that, cloaked in sanctity, restrict freedom. If Foucault showed that knowledge and power are twins, and Habermas reminded us that rationality only finds meaning in the context of free dialogue, then the mission of the "Second Enlightenment" is nothing less than reviving this broken connection: reason liberated from domination, and dialogue liberated from fear. This is the theoretical foundation upon which the "Sacred Rebellion" is defined not as a revolt against faith, but as a defense of the dignity of thought against every new form of ideological idol-making. It must be remembered that the purveyors of Sacred Ignorance will not be defeated by beautiful slogans; they only retreat when the cost of suppressing rationality for themselves becomes higher than the cost of accepting it.

Breaking the silence is the first step in breaking the chains. This step can begin by asking an uncomfortable question in a university seminar, by supporting a colleague under pressure, by writing a letter to a newspaper editor, or by challenging a stereotype in everyday conversation. Every small act of rational resistance is a bulwark in the great battle for the liberation of reason.

Now, at this critical juncture in history, our fundamental confrontation is not between East and West, old and new, or even faith and non-belief, but a battle over the very nature of truth and rationality. "Sacred Ignorance," in a modern guise—backed by fabulous wealth, an unrelenting propaganda machine, and tools of systematic censorship—once again seeks to lull the human conscience into hibernation and entrench the "Genocide of Freedom" in the heart of the very democracies that claim to be its standard-bearers. But history teaches us that the fire of rationality can never be extinguished forever.

Our "Sacred Rebellion" manifests not through violence, but through the pen, through speech, through relentless research, and through peaceful steadfastness against all forms of political idol-making and intellectual dogmatism. The "Second Enlightenment" is not a historical event, but a perpetual call—a call for humans, everywhere and at all times, to keep alive within themselves the courage for independent thought; for truth, however bitter and costly, is always more sacred than the complacency of silence. The future of our civilization lies not in the hands of the powerful, but depends on the awakening of the collective conscience and the eternal perseverance of free thought.

Just as Kant, with his enlightening cry of "*Sapere Aude*," emphasized the courage to know, now in a new era, the call of the "Second Enlightenment" must be sounded: not only "Dare to know" but "**Dare to defend, in practice, what you know against all new forms of tyranny**." This is the true meaning of the Sacred Rebellion in our time—rational perseverance against the darkness that now threatens freedom not in the guise of religious dogmatism, but in the form of sanctified political ideologies and systematic mechanisms of silence.

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